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The Peoples of the Soviet Union

Corliss Lamont

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TO MY CHILDREN

PREFACE

DURING the last decade I have done a good deal of lecturing on the Soviet Union throughout the United States and have taught courses concerning the U.S.S.R. at Cornell and Harvard Universities. In suggesting special readings to questioners and students I have constantly been baffled in recommending an adequate, up-to-date, and readable book covering the subject of the Soviet peoples and the Soviet minorities policy. And I finally decided that I would try to fill the gap to the best of my ability by writing a book on the subject myself.

There is an infinite amount of material available about the many different peoples of the Soviet Union, and a whole volume could be written about each of the chief nationalities. In this book, however, I do not pretend to give an exhaustive study of the background, culture, and current status of even one Soviet people. Rather I have attempted to present an over-all picture of the Soviet peoples in general and the concrete functioning of the unique Soviet minorities policy.

The field of Soviet nationalities is a developing one in which significant changes are constantly occurring and fresh knowledge keeps coming to light. Thus at present writing it has been impossible to obtain reliable data on all the war losses, population shifts, and other such developments that have taken place in the U.S.S.R. during the Second World War.

Besides my long-standing interest in Soviet affairs, at least one other motive has played a major role in my writing this book about Soviet races and nations. That is my conviction that interracial and international prejudices are one of the worst evils in our present-day world and are a prime factor in causing wars. Race prejudice, particularly, I have always felt was one

of the greatest abominations of modern society. I can think of nothing more unjust, more cruel, more truly uncivilized than discrimination against individuals or groups because of their color, facial characteristics or ethnic origin. And I believe that a study of how the diverse peoples of the Soviet Union work and live together can cast considerable light on the problem of minorities in the United States and other countries.

In preparing this book I have become greatly indebted to a number of authors whose writings I have drawn upon; indeed, my sincere gratitude is due to almost all the writers mentioned in the brief bibliography. In addition, I wish to thank the American Russian Institute and especially Miss Carol Jacobson of its research staff for invaluable assistance in tracking down and checking on innumerable obscure facts. Special acknowledgment is due also to Mr. J. McA. Smiley for the maps; to Mr. Bunji Tagawa for the charts on pp. 160 and 161; and to Mr. Theodore Shabad for assisting me with the Chart of Soviet Nationalities in the Appendix. Some sections of the book have appeared in the monthly magazine *Soviet Russia Today*. Unless otherwise credited, all photographs in this book are from Sovfoto.

C. L.

NEW YORK CITY,
November 1, 1945

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THE PEOPLES
OF THE SOVIET UNION

CHAPTER I

THE SOVIET LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Meaning of Ethnic Democracy

WHEN the powerful armies of Nazi Germany and its satellites hurled their concentrated might against the land of the Soviets in June, 1941, they soon found themselves fighting to the death, not with the Russians alone but also with scores of other peoples living within the U.S.S.R. who rallied heroically to the defense of their country. Some of these nationalities, such as the Ukrainians, the Armenians, and the Jews, were already familiar to the world at large. Others with strange-sounding names, like the Uzbeks and Tadzhiks, the Bashkirs, the Yakuts and the Mari, were almost totally unknown outside of the Soviet Union. Yet these many different minorities, more than 170 altogether and constituting almost one-half of the total Soviet population, played an immense and indispensable role in the remarkable showing of the U.S.S.R. against Hitler's formidable legions.

From one end of the vast Soviet Union to the other the various peoples, with only minor exceptions, worked together in whole-hearted co-operation and comradeship to resist and finally defeat the enemy. They almost completely thwarted the Nazi hope, expressed in directives to the German armies and in anti-Semitic leaflets dropped by airplanes over Soviet cities, of stirring up disunity among them. And their unremitting energy and devotion on both the battle front and the home front were a very large element in solidifying morale throughout the Soviet motherland. Thus the unique Soviet nationalities policy, grown

to full maturity and strength during more than two decades of peace, successfully met its supreme test in the greatest war of history.

Soviet military communiqués constantly referred to the part played in the conflict by soldiers from the minority nations. Here, for instance, is part of Commander in Chief Stalin's Order of the Day for August 30, 1943: "In commemoration of the liberation of the Rostov region and the town of Taganrog, the name of Taganrog Divisions will be conferred upon the 130th Rifle Division and the 416th Rifle Division, made up of Azerbaidzhanians." In the defense of Sevastopol and Stalingrad Armenian troops especially distinguished themselves. Earlier, in the repulse of Hitler's 1941 offensive on Moscow, twenty-eight members of the famous Panfilov division died to the last man holding a road against fifty Nazi tanks by means of hand grenades and gasoline bottles. These twenty-eight were composed of sixteen Great Russians, five Ukrainians, five Kazakhs, one Kirgiz and one Jew.

Special military decorations were awarded to Red Army men and guerrillas from almost every Soviet nationality, including, as of October 1, 1944, 409,668 Ukrainians, 107,151 Byelorussians, 55,767 Jews, 55,316 Tatars, and 31,668 Kazakhs. Many women fighters from the various ethnic groups of the U.S.S.R. received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. The leadership of the Red Army also reflects to a considerable degree the multinational character of the Soviet state. Thus prominent among Soviet generals are Ivan Chernyakhovsky, a Ukrainian who died of wounds in the East Prussian offensive; Ivan Bagramian, an Armenian; Sabir Rakhimov, an Uzbek; and Lev Dovator, a Jew who was killed in action commanding a cossack cavalry division. Among those holding the rank of Marshal are Semyon Timoshenko, a Ukrainian born in Moldavia; Konstantin K. Rokossovsky, of Polish origin; and Georgi K. Zhukov, a Russian. Generalissimo Joseph Stalin is a Georgian. Three minor-

ity Republics alone—Armenia, Byelo-Russia, and Latvia—gave to the Soviet forces 197 generals.

The Soviet minorities policy goes back to the early days of the Communist Revolution and was first enunciated by the Soviet Government on November 15, 1917, a little more than a week after its coming into power. At that time it issued, under the signatures of Lenin as Premier and Stalin as Commissar of Nationalities, "The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia." This emancipation proclamation for Soviet minorities pledged the new regime to uphold the following four basic principles: "The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia; the right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, even to the extent of separation and the formation of independent states; the abolition of all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions; and the free development of the national minorities and ethnic groups inhabiting Russia."¹

A few weeks later the Soviet Government gave out another significant pronouncement addressed to the Moslem peoples of the old Tsarist Empire. "Mohammedans of Russia," it began, "Tatars of the Volga and Crimea; Kirgiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan; Turks and Tatars of Transcaucasia, Chechens and Mountaineers of the Caucasus—all those whose mosques and chapels have been destroyed, whose beliefs and customs have been trampled under foot by the Tsars and oppressors of Russia! Henceforth your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are free and inviolable. Build your national life freely and unhindered. You have a right to do so. Know that your rights, as well as the rights of all peoples of Russia, are protected by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies."²

These declarations had an immediate and widespread effect throughout the former territories of the Tsar. Copies of them were dispatched far and wide and the momentous news they contained was spread by word of mouth among peoples to whom written documents were unintelligible. Though there was con-

siderable opposition to the Communist Revolution among the minority groups, strong elements among them rallied to the support of the Bolsheviks and helped to disorganize the rear of the counterrevolutionary armies. A decisive factor in this aid rendered to the Soviet Government was its promise of liberation to subject nationalities as compared with the certainty of renewed oppression if the Whites triumphed over the Reds.

In due course Lenin and his colleagues worked out for the new regime the official title of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, abbreviated as U.S.S.R. And this name in itself partly carried the implications of the Soviet policy toward minority peoples. ("Soviet" is simply the Russian word for "Council," while "Socialist" refers to the new socio-economic system of the country.) The word "Russia," be it noted, was omitted entirely. The reason for this was that the Soviet Government wanted to make sure that the numerous races and nationalities of the former Russian Empire would be on a free and equal basis in the socialist state and would not in any sense feel subordinate, as in the old Tsarist days, to the large Russian majority. At the same time the Soviets, following the federative principle, like the United States, left the door open for new Republics to join the Union, just as new States had joined the U.S.A.

So the vast commonwealth of Soviet peoples became, in its own way, another United States or, more accurately, the United Nations of Eurasia. In this federation Russia proper functions as merely one Union Republic among a number of other constituent Republics, though most non-Soviet writers have wrongly continued to refer to the entire U.S.S.R. as "Russia." It is likewise technically incorrect to use the term "Russians" for the inhabitants of the Soviet Union as a whole. There simply does not exist a single word for the Soviet people as such.

I think that the best phrase to use in summarizing the Soviet position regarding minorities is to call it *racial* or *ethnic democracy*. Whatever our views concerning the extent of *political* democracy within the U.S.S.R., we must recognize Soviet Rus-

sia's long-established and uncompromising support of ethnic democracy. In this important sphere of human freedom I believe that the Soviet attitude, which is the precise opposite of the hideous Nazi and Fascist racism, has constituted our ally's greatest non-military contribution toward victory over the Axis. In 1942 Premier Stalin officially stated that the war aims of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition must include "abolition of racial exclusiveness" and "equality of nations."

In November, 1944, Stalin went into this question in further detail, saying: "Soviet patriotism does not disunite, but on the contrary consolidates all nations and nationalities in our country into one single fraternal family. In this should be seen the basis of the indestructible and still stronger friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union. At the same time the peoples of the Soviet Union respect the rights and independence of the peoples of countries abroad, and have always displayed their readiness to live in peace and friendship with neighboring states." And concerning Germany he added: "The Soviet people hate the German invaders not because they are people of a foreign nation, but because they have brought our people and all freedom-loving peoples misery and suffering. It is an old saying of our people: 'The wolf is not bad because he is gray, but because he ate the sheep.'"³

The Different Ethnic Groups

It is not surprising that the U.S.S.R. should have within its borders a very great number and variety of distinct and separate nationalities and ethnic groups, both large and small—more, in fact, than any other country except India. For the Soviet Union is in area by far the biggest national unit in the world, spreading out over major portions of two continents and bordering upon fourteen different nations. It covers a territory representing over one-sixth of the earth's land surface and possessing more than one-eleventh of its total inhabitants. Its

area is more than 8,700,000 square miles, or nearly three times as large as continental United States, bigger than all North America and four times the size of Europe without its Soviet extension.

From the Arctic Ocean to Afghanistan more than 2,700 miles south, from Poland to the Sea of Japan almost 6,000 miles east, the Red flag flies—over rivers, seas, lakes, plains, steppes, mountains, plateaus, deserts, taiga, and tundra that beget virtually every kind of climate, vegetation, and animal life. The infinite scope and variety of natural resources—of minerals, oil, water-power, agriculture, timber—within these continental domains make the Soviet Union the most completely self-sufficient of all nations from an economic point of view. The old peasant proverb is right, that "Russia is not a country; it is a world."

Within the boundaries of this Soviet world there are 177 distinguishable races, nationalities, and tribes, speaking some 125 different languages or dialects and practicing as many as forty different religions. Only ninety-five of these groups, however, number more than 10,000, and these constitute all but a small fraction of the Soviet population of over 202,000,000, estimated as of July, 1941. Forty-four are officially mentioned in the present Soviet Constitution, and fifty-four have their own special autonomous territories of one sort or another. The largest single ethnic division in the Soviet Union is Slav and totals more than 154,000,000 or above three-fourths of the entire population.

The Slavs consist mainly of the Great Russians—the Russians proper, who, numbering almost 105,000,000, or over one-half of all the Soviet people, form the central core of Slavic strength and have settled in all parts of the U.S.S.R.; the 37,000,000 Ukrainians of the South who occupy the rich industrial and agricultural lands bordering on the Black Sea and Sea of Azov; and the Byelo-Russians, 8,600,000 strong, who live in the western zone, with the Ukraine to the south and the Baltic States to the north. Since "Byelo-Russian" is the Russian word for

"White Russian," these Slavs are sometimes called by the latter name and should not be confused with the anti-Soviet White Russian *émigrés* who fled abroad during the Revolution and Civil War. The Slav total is rounded out by some 4,000,000 Poles,* divided about evenly between the Byelo-Russian and Ukrainian Republics, and by approximately 270,000 Bulgarians and 30,000 Czechoslovaks chiefly in the Ukraine. Because the Nazi invasion engulfed the whole of Byelo-Russia and the Ukraine, and a large portion of the Russian Republic, war casualties among the civilians in these areas were especially severe and have correspondingly reduced the relative preponderance of Slavs in the U.S.S.R.

In religion the Slavs have for centuries been predominantly members of the Orthodox Eastern Church, commonly known as the Russian Orthodox or Greek Orthodox, between which and the Roman Catholic Church there developed a permanent schism in the year 1054. The Russian Orthodox Church, like the Protestant, has consistently refused to acknowledge the authority of the Pope.

The Soviet or eastern Slavs are only one branch of the Slav family, which, aggregating more than 300,000,000, is by far the most numerous ethnic stock in Europe. Closely related, both racially and linguistically, to the Soviet Slavs are the western Slavs (the Poles, the Czechs, and the Slovaks) and the southern or Balkan Slavs (the Serbs, the Croats, the Slovenes, the Macedonians, and the Bulgarians).

Next to the Slav the most prevalent racial strain in the U.S.S.R. is the Turco-Tatar, some 21,000,000 strong. The Turco-Tatars, dark-visaged and oblique-eyed, are chiefly the mixed descendants of the Mongolian, Tatar, and Turkic warriors who were led to far-ranging conquest in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the Asiatic emperors, Genghis Khan

* The Soviet-Polish frontier settlement of 1945 and subsequent repatriation of Poles reduced this figure to 1,000,000 or less.

and Tamerlane, and their successors. They include the Crimean and Kazan Tatars, the Bashkirs and Chuvash of the Volga River basin, the Azerbaidzhanians of the Transcaucasus; the Uzbeks and Turkmenians, the Kazakhs and Kirgiz, of Central Asia; and various peoples in distant Siberia such as the Yakuts and Oirots. The prevailing religion of the Turco-Tatars is Mohammedan, though some of them, like the Chuvash and the Yakuts, have been converted to the Orthodox Church.

Like the Slavs, the Turco-Tatars are widely spread throughout the Soviet Union in both its European and Asiatic portions. For the successive waves of Turco-Tatar invasion from the east and south swept deep into European Russia, to the banks of the Volga and beyond. Indeed, for more than two centuries these virile peoples, controlling much of the Volga River, were able to levy tribute on the Russians to the west. Then, as the movement of invaders from eastern empires receded, the Turco-Tatars left behind permanent settlements along the Volga, in the Crimea, and on the western shores of the Caspian Sea, retiring finally to Central Asia and even further east.

Another important ethnic grouping, olive-skinned in complexion, are the Japhetic peoples of the Caucasus and the Transcaucasus—the picturesque Armenians, Adzharians, Abkhazians, Georgians, Kurds, Khabardinians and others, numbering about 7,000,000 altogether. These peoples are rather mixed in their religious faith, some being Mohammedans, others Russian Orthodox, and the Armenians adhering to their own particular brand of Christianity. Scholars have recently solved the linguistic puzzle of the Basque language of the French and Spanish Pyrenees by finding that this tongue belongs in the Japhetic group.

The term "Japhetic" stems from the name of Noah's second son, Japheth, who, the Bible says, joined the rest of Noah's family in the legendary ark. According to the Book of Genesis, "God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged. The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained.

. . . And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat." This refers to the general vicinity of present-day Mt. Ararat, bearing the Old Testament name, a towering peak just beyond the boundary of Soviet Armenia in Turkey.

The ancestors of the present Japhetic peoples lived and fought for centuries among the steep and rugged Caucasus mountains. Their enemies were either some powerful invader or one another. Mr. Albert Rhys Williams, in his volume *The Soviets*, sketches in the background: "Across this land rolled the conquering armies of the world—the Roman legions, the hosts of Persia and Macedonia, the Mongols, and the Crusaders. A hundred times its cities have been sacked and pillaged—every pass and hill and highroad soaked in blood.

"This warring past is reflected in the ruins of fortresses that crown the heights; in the national costume, slashed with a row of cartridge-pockets across the breast and a gleaming dagger at the belt . . . in the blood-feuds that raged amongst the hill-tribes always so quick with the knife or trigger to avenge an insult or defend their honor. Ceaseless conflict with human forces and with nature—matching their wits and strength against the mountain wastes—has made this people sinewy, resourceful, adroit, and artful." ⁴

A fourth pervasive ethnic strain in the Soviet Union is the Jewish. At the outbreak of the Second World War approximately 3,100,000 Jews lived in the U.S.S.R., mainly in the western Republics, and comparatively few in Asia. With the new areas incorporated in the West in 1939 and 1940, the Soviet Union acquired about 2,200,000 more Jews, bringing the total to around 5,300,000. This gave the Soviet Republic a larger aggregate of Jews than even the United States, with its nearly 5,000,000. Because of the great number of Soviet Jews, perhaps above 1,500,000, slaughtered by the Nazis since 1941, the U.S.S.R. now ranks second to the U.S.A. in size of Jewish population.

Then there are the Finno-Ugrians, a strong and vigorous racial stock concentrated in the northwestern part of the Soviet Union. Numbering approximately 5,000,000, they consist of the Finns and Karelians of the Karelo-Finnish Union Republic; their Estonian cousins just south across the Gulf of Finland; and a related patchwork of peoples like the Mari along the middle Volga and the Komi scattered as far east as the northern Ural Mountains. It is these small nationalities of partly Finnish blood that have provided the Helsinki imperialist clique, with its Nazi affiliations, an excuse for claiming on behalf of a "Greater Finland" Soviet territory stretching all the way to the Urals. The Finno-Ugrians are also related to the Hungarians. They are Russian Orthodox in religion, except for the Finns and Estonians who are Protestant.

Scores of other racial and national minorities dwell within the U.S.S.R. For example, the Latvians, the Lithuanians, the Moldavians, the Germans, the Iranians, and the Mongols are all present in substantial numbers. Then there are numerous small peoples in the Caucasus that I have not mentioned, including a few hundred Negroes, twenty-six more groups in the Soviet North and no less than eighty in the Far East. Meanwhile the tremendous ethnic complexity of the Soviet Union should be already clear, with almost every type of color, physiognomy, and cultural tradition represented in this great multinational, multiracial Eurasian federation.

The Union Republics and Their Subdivisions

Each of the most important and populous nationalities of the U.S.S.R. that borders on the outside world is organized into a separate Union Republic. Today there are sixteen of these Republics in the Soviet league of nations, though it was not always so. For the first Soviet Constitution, of July 10, 1918, was that of the Russian Republic alone; and it took several years for this Soviet Government headed by Lenin to defeat and drive

out the White counterrevolutionaries with their supporting armies from no less than fourteen foreign states.

Hence not until December 30, 1922, was the U.S.S.R. officially founded as a union of the Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republics. The first Constitution of the U.S.S.R. was ratified by the Central Executive Committee on July 6, 1923, and by the All-Union Congress of Soviets on January 31, 1924. As time passed, other peoples in the federation evolved into full Union status or entirely new nations joined. Thus the number of constituent Republics grew from four at the beginning to seven in 1924, then to eleven in 1936 when the new Constitution was enacted, and finally to sixteen in 1940 with the extension of Soviet frontiers in the West.

All of these Union Republics maintain and develop their own particular customs, languages, and institutions under the Soviet principle that the cultures of the various peoples making up the U.S.S.R. should be "national in form and socialist in content." They elect their own deputies to the Soviet of Nationalities, one of the two Chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Constitution also gives these Republics the right to have their own diplomatic representatives in foreign countries and their own army formations within the Red Army, and to withdraw from the Union if and when they see fit.

Within the Union Republics themselves there is formal recognition and organization of additional minorities that are numerically substantial and geographically compact. There are thirty-eight of these in all, twenty-two of them located in Europe, and sixteen in Asia. Nineteen of these peoples are organized into Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (A.S.S.R.), in which category several of the present Union Republics once were. Nine more nationalities are organized into Autonomous Regions (A.R.) and ten into National Districts (N.D.). All of these Autonomous Republics, Autonomous Regions, and National Districts have their own languages, cultural institutions,

and political representation in the Supreme Soviet. There are other subdivisions of a purely administrative character within the Union Republics, but they are of little concern for the discussion of minorities.

It is important to realize that all of the main ethnic territorial divisions have within their borders a minority or minorities other than the predominant one. Thus the Ukrainian Republic contained, in 1941, 3,000,000 Great Russians, 2,000,000 Poles, and several hundred thousand each of Byelo-Russians, Bulgarians, and Greeks. At the same time, several million Ukrainians live outside the Ukrainian S.S.R. in other Union Republics.

Practically every Union Republic, Autonomous Republic, and Autonomous Region includes substantial numbers of Great Russians. The population of the Kazakh Union Republic is about 20 per cent Great Russian in origin, that of the Udmurt Autonomous Republic about 43 per cent, and that of the Oïrot Autonomous Region about 52 per cent. And so it goes. The Chart in the Appendix shows the proportion of the main peoples, by national origin, in each territorial division, according to the Soviet census of 1926. *National origin* does not necessarily coincide with *nationality*, as defined in the 1939 census, since a Soviet citizen has the right to identify himself with the nationality of his choice regardless of the language and origin of his parents.

Many of the minorities within minorities are organized into special village or small regional soviets. For example, the Russian Republic, in addition to the main subdivisions listed in our Chart, has over 150 national regions and over 3,000 national village soviets. In the Ukraine there are likewise a large number of national regions and village soviets established on an ethnic basis, including Great Russian, Byelo-Russian, Moldavian, Greek, Jewish, Bulgarian, Czech, and Polish groups. To a lesser extent the same condition exists in the other Union Republics. These national village and regional soviets are not represented

as such in the Soviet of Nationalities or any other legislative body.

Another point worth stressing is that a little study of Soviet population statistics completely refutes the oft-repeated argument that the Soviet people are fundamentally Asiatic rather than European. This claim is advanced in order to make the U.S.S.R. seem a mysterious, oriental country impossible to trust and understand. It was a favorite theory of the Nazis, whose official philosopher, Alfred Rosenberg, developed it at length in his book *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*. Adolf Hitler himself kept harping on this theme for the purpose of arousing hostility against the Soviet Union and splitting it from the western democracies. In his last-ditch speech of January 31, 1945, for example, the Fuehrer railed as usual against "the specter of Asiatic bolshevism" and "the hurricane from Central Asia," asserting that Nazi Germany was the great defender of Europe against the East. A month later Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels was telling the Germans that "like our fathers before us, we shall break the assault of the Mongols against the heart of Europe."

Actually we find that from a geographical viewpoint only 44,000,000, or about 22 per cent, of the entire Soviet population live in Asia and that a majority of these are Great Russians or other Slavs who at one time or other have migrated to the East. However, since some Asiatic peoples are located in Soviet Europe, it is more conclusive to note that the Soviet ethnic groups indisputably European—principally the Slavs, the Baltic peoples, the Finno-Ugrians, the Germans, the Moldavians, and the Jews (except for the few definitely Asiatic Jews)—add up to more than 171,000,000 or approximately 84 per cent of the 202,000,000 Soviet total. This leaves at most 31,000,000 Asiatics, including primarily the Turco-Tatars, the Japhetic peoples, the Iranians, the Mongols, and the small native tribes of the Russian Republic in Asia.

Of course there has been constant intermarriage between the different ethnic groups, under both the Tsarist and Soviet regimes. But since the Slavs and Great Russians have for centuries been numerically predominant, they have tended in some degree to absorb the other groups rather than to be absorbed by them. Hence the old saying, "Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tatar," is certainly incorrect if it means that fundamentally the Russian is an uncivilized Asiatic with a European veneer. Yet undoubtedly some element of Tatar blood flows in the veins of many Russians, as does Finno-Ugrian or Japhetic or Mongolian blood.

It is inaccurate, however, to assert that the Soviet Union is a "melting pot" in the same sense as the United States. For while a good deal of biological admixture has taken place among the many Soviet nationalities, they have maintained their separate territories and statehood. And they have developed their native cultures to a far greater degree than the foreign-language groups in America. In the U.S.A., furthermore, the political and social pressures are in the direction of building one uniform culture whereas in the U.S.S.R. multinational culture is at present encouraged both by law and public opinion.

The Chart of Soviet Nationalities in the Appendix gives a full list of the Soviet Union Republics, Autonomous Republics, Autonomous Regions, and National Districts, as well as presenting much fundamental factual information about them. My population estimates are based on the last Soviet census of January, 1939, and a 2 per cent annual natural increase for the two and one-half years from that date through June, 1941, when the Nazi invasion occurred. I have also added the 23,000,000 people who lived in the new Soviet territories incorporated in 1939 and 1940 and have assumed a small increase among them. Allowance must be made for some margin of error in these statistics.

The population totals in this Chart and throughout the book

do not include the 2,000,000 or more inhabitants who, owing to Soviet territorial acquisitions, have come within the boundaries of the U.S.S.R. since 1940. Nor do they take into consideration the appalling Soviet war losses, which probably run as high as 15,000,000 for the army and civilians together.

CHAPTER II

THE RUSSIAN REPUBLIC

Extent and Natural Resources

ALL BUT seven of the thirty-eight minorities organized into Autonomous Republics, Autonomous Regions, or National Districts are part of the huge, sprawling Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. This Republic, which was the first to be established, is by far the largest in the U.S.S.R. in respect to both population and size. It has about 114,000,000 people, of whom only 84,000,000 are Great Russians, another 21,000,000 Great Russians living in other Republics.

In area the Russian Republic covers over 75 per cent of the entire Soviet Union, extending from eastern Europe clear across Siberia to the Pacific Ocean and Bering Strait, where its mainland reaches to within fifty-six miles of Alaska and North America. It stretches 3,000 miles along the borders of China, the Mongolian People's Republic, and Manchuria; and has a coastline of some 5,000 miles facing the Arctic Ocean. In southern Europe the Russian S.F.S.R. takes in a substantial segment of the Caucasus Mountains with their ancient peoples and towering peaks. Within the territory of this Republic are colossal treasures of iron, coal, peat, oil, apatite, gold and other raw materials; inexhaustible supplies of water-power; and many of the richest agricultural lands in the U.S.S.R., including the fertile fields of the Volga, the Don, the Kuban and western Siberia.

The capital of the Russian S.F.S.R. is teeming, busy, beautiful Moscow, which is also of course the capital of the Soviet Union

as a whole. In the Russian Republic are many of the other leading Soviet cities, such as the embattled big three of the Nazi-Soviet war. These are Leningrad, which endured one of the most frightful sieges in history, former capital of old Russia under the names of St. Petersburg and Petrograd, cradle of the 1917 Revolution and industrial, shipping and cultural center of paramount importance; Stalingrad, great industrial metropolis and agricultural machinery center on the lower Volga where Hitler's powerful offensive of 1942 met its doom; and Sevastopol, Black Sea naval base of the Crimea and battered, ruined, steel-hearted city that won immortality through its intrepid resistance against Nazi forces.

Russia-in-Asia contains the two big new industrial regions that proved so vital in the successful waging of the war: the Ural Mountains development centered around Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk, and Sverdlovsk; and the Kuznetsk Basin development centered around Novosibirsk and Stalinsk. Siberia also includes the Far Eastern region with its fast-growing industrial centers such as Khabarovsk and Komsomolsk; and the strategic port of Vladivostok, meaning "Mistress of the East," on the Sea of Japan and terminal station of the 5,000-mile Trans-Siberian Railway.

It is important to note that in the northwest the Russian S.F.S.R. reaches far beyond the Arctic Circle to the Kola Peninsula, sometimes erroneously thought to be part of the Karelo-Finnish Republic. This district once seemed so remote, difficult and dangerous for travelers and settlers, that there was a popular saying: "It is only a step from Kola to Hell." The peninsula contains the well-known port of Murmansk, so essential in the receiving of American and British Lend-Lease supplies during the war and, due to the warming influence of the nearby Gulf Stream, open to navigation throughout the year.

Here also in the Kola region is snowy Lapland, where the few surviving Lapps, less than 2,000 in number, still base their existence on reindeer and fish. *Lapps* is a name bestowed by the

Swedes and means "nomads," but the Soviets have given this people its correct name, *Saamis*. Flat-faced and racially Mongoloid, these Lapps or Saamis are reputedly the shortest people in Europe, with an average stature of scarcely more than five feet. There are additional Lapp remnants numbering close to 30,000 scattered throughout northern Scandinavia.

Not far to the west of Murmansk we find the ice-free fjord of Petsamo and rich nickel deposits in the vicinity. Petsamo was historically a part of old Russia and not of the Grand Duchy of Finland, but was nonetheless ceded to the Finns by the Soviet Union in 1920. During the Second World War the Finns and Nazis used Petsamo as an important submarine and airplane base against Allied ships sailing the northern route to the U.S.S.R. Thus it was not unexpected that under the 1944 peace terms with Finland the Soviet Government demanded and received back permanently this Arctic harbor and the surrounding region. This small territorial acquisition of 4,087 square miles comes under the jurisdiction of the Russian Republic and gives the Soviet Union a common frontier with Norway.

On the icy waters of the White Sea lies another strategic Russian port of the north, Archangel, scene of Allied and American intervention against the Soviets in 1918. The huge administrative district of the Archangel Oblast takes in the far-away Arctic islands of Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land, a vast archipelago of 800 islands almost completely submerged beneath an ice cap. One of the largest islands in this group is Graham Bell, named after the American inventor of the telephone by Walter Wellman, American explorer who headed an expedition to this remote polar area in 1898-99.

Altogether Wellman named about a dozen islands, capes, and bodies of water in the northeastern part of Franz Josef Land after prominent Americans who helped finance his expedition. For instance, just south of Graham Bell Island is Morgan Strait, named after J. Pierpont Morgan the elder. Somewhat south of



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this strait lies Gould Bay, named after Helen M. Gould, daughter of Jay Gould, the railway magnate.

South of Gould Bay is situated Dawes Island, named after Charles G. Dawes, Chicago banker and Vice-President of the United States in the conservative Republican administration of Calvin Coolidge. Another island in the south central section of the archipelago bears the characteristic American name of Alger, not named after the popular author of juveniles, but after Russell A. Alger, Secretary of War in McKinley's first administration. Far to the east, in the Siberian Arctic and part of Yakutia, is Bennett Island, named after James Gordon Bennett, Jr., for many years proprietor of the New York *Herald*.

Within the Russian Republic's big Archangel Oblast and some 200 miles east of the city of Archangel is the Nenets National District, inhabited by the primitive tribe of Nentsi, whose economy still revolves around fish and reindeer. The Nenets National District is typical of the ten National Districts organized within the Russian S.F.S.R. for some of the smaller peoples. Most of these National Districts are in the Far North and all but the Nenets District are in Asia. I shall postpone consideration of these minorities until I take up the Siberian peoples of the Russian Republic as a whole.

Though the Russian Republic reaches as far south as the Black Sea and the Caucasus and its summers are hot and bright, it has all in all the coldest, windiest, harshest weather of any Union Republic except the Karelo-Finnish. During the long winters, with their deep snows and furious blizzards, temperatures over most of the Russian S.F.S.R. are well below freezing and frequently sub-zero. While much of the Russian Republic lies in northern latitudes, its severe climate in both Europe and Asia is due primarily to its continental position, removed from the tempering influence of the warm-water oceans.

The Great Russians

Coming to the Great Russian people themselves, we note that they tend toward blondness, together with orange-brown or blue eyes, heavy features, broad shoulders and a generally stocky physique. The origin of the word "Russian" is a moot point, though some competent authorities believe that it is derived from *rusij*, meaning fair-haired or blond. Long before the present century the Russians had proved themselves one of the most vigorous, fertile, and talented people in history. Unquestionably they possess one of the great traditions in European culture, particularly in the realms of literature and the drama, music and the ballet.

The finest flowering of Russian culture under the Tsars took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It was during this period that poets like Alexander Pushkin and Michael Lermontov, novelists like Leo Tolstoy and Feodor Dostoyevski, dramatists like Anton Chekhov and D. N. Ostrovski, composers like Peter Tschaikovsky and Nicolas Rimsky-Korsakov, ballet artists like Anna Pavlova and Michael Fokine, scientists like Ivan Pavlov and Dmitri Mendeleyev, did their world-renowned creative work. And of course Russian history also has a number of outstanding figures in statecraft and military affairs, such as Peter the Great and Marshal Suvorov.

The Russians of the Soviet era are proud of this illustrious past and have done everything possible to preserve its accomplishments and extend them to the masses of the people. At the same time the post-revolutionary Russians, though immersed in the tasks of economic construction and military self-defense, have made notable contributions in the spheres of culture and political economy. Maxim Gorky and Mikhail Sholokhov have led the way in the novel, Vladimir Mayakovski and Boris Pasternak in poetry, Mikhail Bulgakov and Alexander Afino-

genev, who was tragically killed while carrying on war duties in Moscow, in the drama.

American symphony orchestras frequently play the works of Dmitri Shostakovich and Serge Prokofieff, who continued their musical composition during the din of war. On the screen, films directed by Sergei Eisenstein and V. I. Pudovkin are familiar to many Americans. In science the names of Peter Kapitsa and Vladimir Lebedenko are outstanding. Vladimir I. Lenin goes down in history as one of the world's greatest statesmen, while Vyacheslav M. Molotov, Soviet Foreign Secretary since 1939, has achieved increasing stature in the field of international affairs. Such men as these carry forward the best in the Great Russian tradition.

Awareness of that tradition and constant stress on it constitute in no sense a reversion to overbearing Russian nationalism. On the contrary, such emphasis is wholly in accord with the liberal Soviet nationalities policy, which stimulates each people in the U.S.S.R. to appreciate fully its own particular culture. Clearly the huge and populous Russian Republic has just as much reason to develop its cultural heritage as Armenia, the Ukraine, or Uzbekistan. Moreover, it is wholly natural that many of the non-Russian inhabitants of the Soviet Union should wish to know and enjoy the masters of Russian art, literature, and science.

The United States has some acquaintance with the Great Russians, since considerable numbers of them, along with other peoples from European Russia, migrated to America to escape Tsarist tyranny. Altogether more than 4,000,000 immigrants entered the U.S.A. from imperial Russia, while about 200,000 more came across the Atlantic or Pacific as exiles or *émigrés* from the Soviet regime after the Revolution of 1917. In 1940 there were in the United States well over 1,000,000 persons born in Tsarist Russia, many, though by no means a majority, of them being Great Russians.

The Great Russians in America have made a name for them-

selves in almost every field of endeavor. Prominent among them are such men as Serge Koussevitsky, the conductor, Igor Stravinsky, the composer, Leonide Massine, the ballet dancer and designer, Alexander de Seversky, the airplane manufacturer, Vladimir K. Zworykin, the scientist, Pitirim A. Sorokin, the sociologist, George Vernadsky, the historian, Vladimir D. Kazakovich, the economist, and other scholars and teachers of note.

A lot of nonsense has been written about the so-called "Russian soul," which is supposed to oscillate between various extreme moods such as ecstasy and despondency, complete absence of inhibitions and a terrible sense of sin, inordinate boastfulness and abject self-abasement. While some Russians no doubt display instability and over-emotionalism in character, just as do some Frenchmen and some Americans, it is most superficial to ascribe such traits to the Russian people as a whole or to claim that such qualities are somehow innate. Hence vague talk about the Russian soul can hardly be depended upon in objectively analyzing any phase of Russian life. Certain foreign press correspondents, however, when hard up for news or perplexed by some new Soviet development, have only too often started writing irrelevancies regarding the mysterious, incalculable Russian soul. Such explanations of important events are mere verbal substitutes for reliable observation and clear thinking.

Furthermore, whatever characteristics the Russians possessed under the Tsarist regime do not necessarily hold true of them today. For since 1917 they have undergone the most radical revolution in history and have been subject to dynamic new influences of an educational and environmental nature. The socialist economic order, together with universal inculcation of Marxist doctrines, has wrought far-reaching changes in the Russians as in the other peoples of the Soviet Union. The all-permeating Soviet system has, in fact, palpably lessened the traditional differences between the Russians and the minority groups, and between the various minorities themselves.

During my trips through the Russian Republic and to cities like Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad, I was impressed particularly by the vigor and earnestness, the gaiety and friendliness of the Russians. Their intentness upon the ambitious aims of Socialism and the Five-Year Plans and their final triumph in the war with Nazi Germany show that the Russian people are both ethically serious and also not impractical, as sometimes thought. But the Russians' devotion to their practical goals and moral ideals, their heroic struggle in the face of many a great ordeal due to domestic troubles or foreign aggression, has not kept them from retaining their high spirits and their huge capacity to enjoy the most varied experiences of life.

As to the friendly spirit of the Russians, they possess a marked human warmth, combined with an engaging frankness and informality, that to my mind constitutes the psychological essence of democracy and accounts in no small measure for the strong support of the Soviet minorities policy by the Great Russian majority. True enough, it required some effort on the part of the Soviets to eliminate the "Great Russian chauvinism" inherited from the Tsars; but the idea of a "master race" never took deep root in Russia at any time and is totally alien to the Russians of today.

The natural friendliness of the Russians I find much akin to that of Americans. And Mrs. Vera M. Dean, herself Russian-born, sees other similarities. "In many ways," she writes, "the Russians resemble the Americans more than any other people. Like Americans, they are eager to ask questions and learn new things; they are not afraid to make mistakes; they have an attitude of breezy but not annoying self-confidence, born of the knowledge that they have vast spaces and great material resources at their disposal; and they adapt themselves readily to new and entirely untried conditions."¹

There are, I believe, still other resemblances between Russians and Americans. They are two of the greatest pioneering in history, Russian enterprise and daring pushing east-

ward to the Pacific while American enterprise and daring pushed westward to the Pacific. And they both have about them a certain largeness of vision, a broad sense of humanity that expresses itself in sincere international idealism. According to Dostoyevski, "In this aspiration toward human universality, the sense of common humanity, is found precisely Russia's outstanding characteristic. . . . To be a genuine Russian means to become the blood brother of all human beings."²

This Russian concern for the welfare of all mankind penetrated even into the ranks of the old nobility and upper class. The eminent writers Count Leo Tolstoy and Prince Peter Kropotkin certainly shared it, as did some of the Tsars some of the time. Alexander I, for example, when he proposed the Holy Alliance in 1815 was undoubtedly motivated by a wish to see international peace established. During this period of his life, Alexander had genuine liberal tendencies and came under the democratizing influence of Thomas Jefferson, who corresponded directly with him.

Unfortunately, the Holy Alliance soon became a reactionary organization holding back the march of progress in Europe and resorting to war and intervention in order to do so. But that cannot alter the fact that Alexander's original intention was to set up a sort of League of Nations to preserve peace through a system of collective security analogous to that envisaged by America's President Woodrow Wilson a century later.

The unwieldy empire ruled by the Russian Tsars was most backward socially, economically, and politically. But in spite of its being an autocratic state and opposed to American principles of government, it maintained on the whole a friendly attitude toward the United States. During the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War, the Tsarist Government gave encouragement to the American Republic. Though occasional disagreements occurred between the United States and imperial Russia, the two countries established a long tradition of co-operation in the international sphere.

This traditional friendship between Russia and America was due both to the shape of world politics and to the respective geographical positions of the two nations. The mutual expansion of the United States and the Tsarist Empire gave both of them seaboard on or near both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Thus, as regards relationships in Asia as well as Europe, the two countries became for each other "a potential friend in the rear of potential enemies." And at the northeastern tip of Asia and the northwestern tip of America, Russia and the United States eventually found themselves close neighbors.

Expansion of the Russian Empire

The Great Russian advance across Siberia and up to Bering Strait was part of a gradual and general expansion—east, west, south and north—unparalleled in history. And at one time the Russians not only owned Alaska, which they sold to the United States in 1867, but had established fur-trading settlements along the North American coast as far as 100 miles above San Francisco.

There were tentative beginnings of a Russian state in the ninth century at Novgorod in the northwest and Kiev, "mother of Russian cities," in the southwest. Kiev Russia, in particular, achieved a considerable sphere of influence and loose control and before its decay officially adopted Greek Orthodox Christianity as its religion, a step that had the most far-reaching consequences for all Russian Slavs. It was the Moscow Principality, however, emerging in the thirteenth century, that laid the solid and enduring foundations of the future Tsarist Empire. Slowly and cautiously Moscow obtained control over neighboring cities and principalities and started a process of development that lasted for about seven centuries and culminated finally in the largest contiguous land empire on the face of the earth.

The growth of imperial Russia was by no means steady and

uninterrupted; frequently, in fact, she was thrown back and lost territory. Wave after wave of foreign invaders swept over the country. In Russia's wars with rival powers she was defeated again and again. She was beaten by the Mongols, by the Swedes, by the Poles, by the Lithuanians, by the Turks, by the English and French, by the Japanese, by the Germans. Yet the Great Russian steamroller, ever aided by the high Slav birth-rate, kept moving ahead, gathering in more and more land, conquering, crushing, annexing, assimilating scores of different peoples in Europe and Asia. In the campaigns against the smaller nationalities, such as those of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Siberia, the Tsarist armies always eventually won through sheer force of numbers and superior fighting weapons.

The emergence of Moscow as a rallying point for the Russian state coincided with the great invasions of the Mongols from the East and their conquest of Kiev under the leadership of Batu, grandson of Genghis Khan. The Mongols set up a vast empire, the Khanate of the Golden Horde, that in Europe stretched from the Ural Mountains across the Middle and Lower Volga River and included the southern Ukraine, Moldavia, and Bulgaria. Hungary also came under the Mongol sway for a short time. The rulers of the Moscow Principality felt it was the better part of statesmanship to avoid a direct clash with the Mongol power and in pursuance of this policy paid regular tribute to the Golden Horde for over 200 years.

Meanwhile Moscow bided its time and extended its sovereignty over increasing numbers of Russians in the surrounding regions and over Finnish tribes to the north. During this same period the eastern Slavs became differentiated into three main groups: the Great Russians, the Little Russians or Ukrainians, and the Byelo-Russians. In the fourteenth century internal dissension commenced to weaken the Golden Horde and soon some of the Mongol princes transferred their allegiance to Moscow. In 1480 Ivan III, Grand Duke of Moscow, finally refused to pay tribute to the Horde. Less than a century later his grandson,

Ivan IV, first Tsar of Russia and remembered in history as Ivan the Terrible, took over the disintegrating Mongol domain and its subject peoples as far as the mouth of the Volga.

Some historians have used the term "Tatar" interchangeably with "Mongol." Actually the Tatars, meaning archers, those who draw the bow, were a special subdivision of the Mongols. And the word "Tatar" came to be applied to those numerous Mongolian elements who remained in the more westerly sections of the Golden Horde's empire as it broke up and who became inextricably mixed with Turkic and other ethnic groups. The invading Mongols and Tatars in fact wrapped around themselves, as they advanced, fragments of conquered peoples whom they used as satellite troops or for forced labor in the rear. This explains the origin of the term "Turco-Tatar." The word "Mongol," on the other hand, came to designate the purer and less diluted ethnic stock stemming from the original Mongolian tribes.

With the reigns of Ivan III and Ivan IV the expansion of the Russians had become greatly accelerated. These two rulers succeeded in substantially adding to the empire in every direction. It was Ivan the Terrible who glimpsed the importance of Siberia and undertook measures to secure that vast storehouse of riches. In 1581 he made a deal with a Cossack outlaw chief named Yermak, whose band was causing trouble along the southeastern border, promising to him as much free land in Siberia as he could conquer from the Mongols. Yermak and his freebooting Cossacks pressed eastward in search of wealth and adventure. After them came more stable pioneers; and in less than sixty years the Great Russians had spanned the widest of all continents and were scanning the shores of the Pacific.

The period covering the last half of the sixteenth century was a memorable one in the careers of other European states besides Russia. Ivan IV's reign overlapped that of both Queen Elizabeth of England and Philip II of Spain. Under Elizabeth, with whom Ivan corresponded, the English defeated the Spanish

Armada (1588) and laid the maritime foundations of the future British Empire. Under King Philip Spain reached the zenith of its power and overseas empire. Toward the end of the century Henry IV ascended the throne in France and started his country on the road to continental supremacy.

The Russian surge into Siberia continued up to and during the rule of Peter the Great, almost all of that vast territory, with its many tribes and peoples, coming under Tsarist control. Peter's own most significant triumphs were in the West where, through his decisive defeat of Sweden, he acquired in 1721 Ingria on the Gulf of Finland, the Karelian Isthmus and Viipuri in Finland, and Estonia and Latvia on the Baltic Sea. In Ingria, at the marshy outlet of the Neva River, Tsar Peter built Russia's first great port, St. Petersburg, the Empire's "window on Europe." So many workers lost their lives in erecting this city among the river swamps and islands that its substructure was said to rest on bones. With the founding of St. Petersburg the Great Russians entered into maritime affairs in earnest, speedily launched a strong navy and later constructed a merchant fleet. Eventually Russia became one of the big naval powers.

The next spectacular series of Russian annexations occurred in the last part of the eighteenth century during the reign of Catherine the Great, who in vigor, statesmanship, and colorfulness of character almost matched Peter himself. Catherine took a generous share of territory in the three partitions of Poland—1772, 1793, and 1795—with Austria and Prussia and thereby extended the frontiers of her realm from two to three hundred miles to the west. Particularly significant from the ethnic viewpoint was the fact that through these additions the Great Russians united within the empire the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians who had formerly been under Polish or Lithuanian rule. In the partition of 1795 Lithuania, which had been absorbed by Poland, also came under Russian sovereignty.

In the south the Empress Catherine beat back the Turks and

established Great Russian dominion on the warm waters of the Black Sea. Here she incorporated the Ukrainian regions bordering upon the Sea of Azov and in the vicinity of Odessa, as well as the strategic Crimean Peninsula still governed by a Tatar khan under Turkish control. This Russian push to the Black Sea was of immense importance to the future of the empire and has sometimes been compared with the Louisiana Purchase that first gave the United States access to the Gulf of Mexico.

Though hard pressed and suffering huge losses of life and property during Napoleon's invasion in 1812, the Tsarist Empire emerged from the Napoleonic period stronger and larger than ever before. In the southwest Alexander I acquired Bessarabia from Turkey and in the northwest Finland from Sweden. In the west he took over a major portion of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw in a fourth partition of Poland. This brought within Russian boundaries the bulk of the Poles, who proved a perpetual headache to the Tsars right up until 1917.

During the nineteenth century imperial Russia absorbed a more numerous and varied assortment of peoples than in any previous hundred years of its existence. For it was during this period that the onward-sweeping Tsarist armies conquered the ethnically complex regions of the Caucasus, the Transcaucasus and Central Asia or Turkestan. At the same time the empire reached out in the Far East, annexing the Amur District and the Maritime Territory, with Vladivostok at its southern extremity. In 1898 the forces of Nicholas II brought about the "lease" of the Liaotung Peninsula from China and in 1900 occupied much of the province of Manchuria. But these two imperialistic ventures soon came to nought through the triumph of the Japanese in the war of 1904-05.

So from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries, the Russians, starting with the Moscow Principality of some 500 square miles, built up a prodigious two-continent empire 8,660,000 square miles in area, covering more than one-sixth of the land surface of the globe and possessing in 1914 a population of

180,000,000, consisting of more than 170 peoples. This ceaseless aggrandizement throughout the entire epoch we know as modern history seems to have been as inexorable as the movement of a great glacier. Neither the Arctic cold nor the desert heat nor interminable distance, neither defeat by invaders nor internal rebellions, could long stay the irresistible advance of the Great Russians.

The full and official title of the last Tsar well indicates both the process and result of the Russian expansion: "Nicholas the Second, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias, of Moscow, Kiev, Vladimir, Novgorod; Tsar of Kazan; Tsar of Astrakhan; Tsar of Poland; Tsar of Siberia; Tsar of Kherson; Tsar of Georgia; Ruler of Pskov; and Grand Duke of Smolensk, Litovsk, Volynsk, Podolsk, and Finland; Prince of Esland, of Livonia, Kurland, and Semigalsk, Samachitsk, Belostok, Korelsk, Tver, Yugorsk, Perm, Viatsk, Bulgaria and others; Ruler and Grand Duke of Nizhni-Novgorod, Chernigov, Riazan, Polotsk, Rostov, Yaroslavl, Belozersk, Udorsk, Obdorsk, Kondimsk, Vitebsk, Mstislavl; and Sovereign of all the Northern Lands; and Ruler of the Iversk, Kartalinsk, and Kabardin lands and the Region of Armenia; Hereditary Ruler and Lord of the Cherkassk and Mountain Princes, and others; Ruler of Turkestan; Hereditary Prince of Norway; Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, Storman, Ditmarsen and Oldenburg, etc., etc., etc." ³

Peoples of the Volga and Crimea

Of the Russian Republic's extensive population, 30,000,000 are non-Russian, including thirty-one minorities that are formally organized and whose combined territories cover in area almost half of the Republic. Fifteen of these have their own Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics, thirteen of which are in European Russia and eight of which lie along the banks or in the huge basin of the Volga. This is the mightiest river in all Europe, "Mother Volga," as the Russians call it. "No other

name," observes Maurice Hindus, "no other place in Russia's far-flung geography, not even Moscow, rouses so much sentiment and so much love. Haunting are the songs, stirring the stories with which Russian folk have always glorified this wondrous river." ⁴

It is natural that various peoples wandering, hunting, fighting over the face of the Russian land centuries ago should finally have settled down in the rich Volga region where food and water, timber and trade, could be abundantly found. But the Great Russians, as was their wont, severely oppressed these nationalities, forcing their populations to pay heavy tribute or actually to become serfs. And so it was no wonder that several of these peoples joined the great rebellion against Empress Catherine the Great led by the dashing Cossack chieftain Pugachev toward the end of the eighteenth century.

In four of the Volga A.S.S.R.'s—the Mari, the Mordovian, the Udmurt and the Komi—the dominant ethnic group is of Finno-Ugrian origin. After the suppression of the Pugachev rebellion, the imperial government undertook strenuous steps, often including duress, to convert these peoples to Russian Orthodox Christianity. To quote Mr. Williams again: "Whole villages, herded into the rivers by the gendarmes, were baptized *en masse* by bishops on the banks. Hurriedly emerging, they shook off the water so the new religion would not 'take.' Mission schools were opened in which, contrary to usual policy, instruction was given in the native tongue. Nominally Orthodox, they were often duped by crafty Russians into buying seats in the Christian heaven, selling their last cow to obtain a choice reservation. At the same time not to offend their own pagan deities they continued to lay food offerings for them beneath the white birches of their ancient sacred groves." ⁵

The Mari Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, about the area of New Hampshire, is situated on the north bank of the Volga between Gorky (formerly Nizhni-Novgorod) and Kazan. It has a population of 600,000 and its economy is based

on lumber. "Lenin's light" is what the Mari call the electricity now fast penetrating to their dark forest villages and dwellings. Some hundred miles to the south of the Mari, along the Moscow-Kuibyshev railway, is the predominantly agricultural Mordovian Republic with 1,275,000 inhabitants. Then a hundred miles to the east of the Mari in the foothills of the Urals lies the Autonomous Republic of the Udmurts, 1,300,000 strong. Since 1917 these people have learned to operate modern machinery and have played a significant role in the industrial development of the Ural region.

Further north, on the turbulent headwaters of the Kama, the Pechora, and the Vychegda Rivers, live the Komi, formerly known as Ziryans, a mere handful of 335,000 people inhabiting a vast territory that is by far the largest of the European Autonomous Republics. The Komi A.S.S.R., stretching along the crest of the Urals and up beyond the Arctic Circle, is, in climate and living conditions, essentially part of the Soviet North. In Tsarist times the primitive Komi, which means in the native tongue simply "We, the People," tilled the land with wooden plows and used gnarled pine trunks as harrows; now agriculture is mechanized and making unprecedented progress.

Timber, of course, fur-bearing animals and reindeer are plentiful in the Komi Republic, but it also possesses big deposits of coal, to an estimated amount of 100 billion tons, of iron ore, oil, manganese, and other minerals. For this reason the Soviets call the region the Donets Basin of the Arctic, after the rich industrial complex in the Ukraine. During the war, in 1943, there was completed the Northern Pechora Railroad, traversing the Komi A.S.S.R. for about 700 miles. This opened up the whole region to through railway traffic and was particularly important in making Komi coal production available to nearby northern cities like Archangel and Leningrad.

If you take a steamer down the broad, winding Volga for a thousand miles or so, as I did in 1932, you pass through several of the Autonomous Republics, starting with the Mari Republic

and the Chuvash, on opposite sides of the river. The Chuvash A.S.S.R. is one of the five Autonomous Republics of Russia whose people are Turco-Tatar in origin and Mohammedan in religion. This Republic has a population of more than 1,000,000, who earn their livelihoods primarily in agriculture and lumber. The tall, splendid oaks of Chuvashia are especially prized. During the past few years the Chuvashians have been growing with signal success the remarkable rubber-bearing plant, kok-sagyz, first discovered in Soviet Central Asia. In Tsarist days Chuvashia, with up to 80 per cent of its people suffering from trachoma, was noted for having the largest proportion of blind in the Empire. About 80 per cent were also afflicted with illiteracy. Now both trachoma and illiteracy have been practically wiped out.

Right next to the Chuvash territory along the Volga is the important Tatar A.S.S.R., bigger than Holland and Belgium combined and with a population of over 3,000,000. Its capital is historic Kazan, at whose university Lenin, who was born 100 miles or so down the river at Ulyanovsk, studied in his youthful years. These Kazan Tatars, with oval faces and scanty beards, speak a Turkish tongue. They were probably the most culturally advanced of any Moslem people under the Tsars and educated many a Mohammedan priest to carry the message of the Koran further east and south. They were one of the first ethnic minorities to set up their own Autonomous Republic after the Soviets took power.

In economic life the Kazan Tatars were noted for their skillful dyeing and tanning of leather, for their gaily colored saddles and boots and little skull caps bright with gold and silver thread. Their proletariat did much of the grueling labor connected with the Volga boats and wharves. Like the inspirers of that old favorite, "Song of the Volga Boatmen," these sinewy Tatars sweated their hearts out along the banks of the river pulling the heavily laden barges upstream. In Tsarist days four-fifths of the output of this region was agricultural; since the

Revolution, industrial production has increased sevenfold and agriculture itself has gone ahead by leaps and bounds under the collective system, with a 50 per cent growth in the sown area. Recently oil was for the first time discovered in the Tatar Republic.

The Kazan Tatars, like the other peoples of the Volga basin, threw themselves wholeheartedly into the war against the Nazis and did their utmost on both the battle front and the home front. Here, for instance, is a message that the women and old people of the Tatar Republic sent to their soldiers who were battling Hitler's Wehrmacht: "The hammers from which the sparks flew when wielded by your strong arms are not lying idle on the ground, the machines at which you worked have not stopped running, the scythes with which you mowed the hay have not grown rusty, the tractors and the harvester combines whose clatter filled the free fields have not come to a standstill, the fire has not gone out in the fireboxes of the locomotives and furnaces and steamships. Your fathers, mothers and sisters have replaced you at your machines and in the collective farm fields."

Along the eastern borders of the Tatar territory is located the Bashkir A.S.S.R., with the largest population, over 3,300,000, of any Autonomous Republic. The Bashkirs are of Turco-Tatar stock and their capital, Ufa, is the leading Mohammedan center of Soviet Europe. Bashkiria takes in the western slope of the southern Ural Mountains and extends all the way to the dividing line between Soviet Europe and Soviet Asia. This Republic contains valuable forest land, a vast area of fertile collective farms and fine pasture land for cattle and horses. The Bashkirs, like several other Soviet peoples, are extremely fond of *koumiss*, a healthful and invigorating drink made out of the fermented milk of mares—a sort of milk wine so mild that the Russians claim "there's not a headache in a skinful." The Bashkir Republic also has rich deposits of copper and oil; and its oil fields are part of the important new Soviet petroleum base in the southern Urals.

Two days south of Kazan by boat are the important Volga cities of Marxstadt, named after Karl Marx, and Engels, named after Marx's renowned co-worker. In 1932 Engels was capital of the Volga German A.S.S.R., a good-sized district on the lower Volga about 150 miles above Stalingrad. A closely knit group of 450,000 Germans lived in this Autonomous Republic, successfully working its fruitful agricultural lands and developing its light industry. Actually this was the first ethnic minority in the Russian Republic to achieve autonomy, having been first organized in 1918 as a so-called "Labor Commune."

Most of these Germans were descendants of those who came to Russia as skilled workers during the eighteenth century and who were granted special privileges by Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. Many of the original immigrants were Mennonites who left Germany because of religious persecution. The Volga Germans were considered an industrious and valued group under both Tsars and Soviets. But on September 24, 1941, when the Nazi armies were advancing at a rapid pace into the U.S.S.R., the Soviet Government abolished the German Republic because many of its citizens were carrying on fifth-column activity on behalf of Adolf Hitler. Its territory was divided up between adjoining regions and its German population moved some 1,500 miles east to the Altai Territory of South Central Siberia.

Besides the Germans of the Volga Republic there were a million others living in the western part of the Soviet Union, especially in the vicinity of Odessa and the lower Dnieper River. The Soviet Government also sent many of these farther into the interior, having discovered Nazi agents among them as far back as 1936. There can be no doubt that when the great test came, a dangerous proportion of the Germans in the U.S.S.R. showed that they had never become properly assimilated to the new Soviet way of life. And instead of manifesting loyalty to the socialist state, they succumbed to traditional feelings of militant

German nationalism. It is evident, therefore, that the Soviet policy signally failed as regards the German minority.

Last Autonomous Republic in the Volga region is the Kalmyk, near the mouth of the river and stretching for a hundred miles along the dry, semidesert steppes adjoining the Caspian Sea on the west. The Volga Kalmyks, now only about 125,000 in number, were a nomadic people of Mongol derivation and Buddhist religion who migrated during the seventeenth century from northwestern China all the way to the valley of the Volga. They are descendants of a group that failed to escape from the tyranny of Catherine the Great in 1771 when the other Kalmyks made their famous trek back to the East, described in De Quincey's exciting "Flight of a Tartar Tribe."

The Kalmyks who remained behind were those who dwelt on the western bank of the Volga. For some reason they were unable to join their brethren who lived on the eastern bank and who, in the middle of winter, undertook one of the most arduous and disastrous mass migrations in history. Tens of thousands perished on the march from cold, famine, and the attacks of hostile tribes. Some of these Kalmyks finally settled in what is now the Oirot Autonomous Region of the U.S.S.R. Barely a third of the 300,000 who started ever reached China proper. (De Quincey's use of the word "Tartar" is inaccurate, since the Kalmyks are Mongols, while the Tartars, or more properly Tatars, were an early subdivision of the Mongols and became inseparably commingled with other peoples of Asia and eastern Europe.)

The economy of the Kalmyk Soviet Republic is chiefly based on cattle-raising and, more recently, fishing. Vast irrigation projects, utilizing the waters of the Volga, are under way to bring fertility to the arid land, a large proportion of which is below sea level. In this country camels are much relied upon as beasts of burden and, in line with established Soviet practice, are bred and cared for in special camel collectives. As a matter

of fact, camels are still used a good deal farther north in the Volga basin and are occasionally seen in Moscow itself.

West and south of the Kalmyk A.S.S.R., in the fertile valleys and plains of southern Russia, live the Don and Kuban Cossacks. Tall and rangy in physique, these hard-riding, hard-fighting frontiersmen and trouble-shooters of Tsarist times are now settling down to the quieter pursuits and pleasures of collective farming and stock-breeding. The bulk of the Cossacks are either Great Russians or Ukrainians and are therefore not a separate ethnic group in themselves. They should not be confused with the Turco-Tatar Kazakhs of Central Asia, though the words *Kazakh* and *Cossack* have a common derivation. In his great novel *The Silent Don*, Sholokhov gives an unforgettable picture of the Cossacks just before and after the Revolution of 1917. During the Nazi-Soviet war regiments of Cossack cavalry frequently distinguished themselves.

One of the most important Autonomous Republics of the Russian S.F.S.R. is that of the Crimea, with its preponderant Tatar and Great Russian ethnic strains. The rich and scenic peninsula that comprises the Crimean Republic juts out into the Black Sea south of the Ukraine and on some maps is mistakenly assigned to the Ukrainian S.S.R. At the tip of the peninsula lies the repeatedly besieged port of Sevastopol in and around which raged the decisive engagement of the Crimean War of 1854-55, remembered by most Americans through Tennyson's poem on the charge of the British Light Brigade at Balaklava.

During the Second World War the Soviet defenders of Sevastopol held out against the Nazis and Romanians in a siege lasting 250 days that utterly devastated the city. The Germans occupied the whole of the Crimea for two years, from the summer of 1942 to the spring of 1944. In February of 1945, President Roosevelt, Premier Stalin, Prime Minister Churchill, and their aides held the epoch-making Crimea Conference at the town of Yalta on the southern Crimean coast. This is a beautiful

and balmy region where low, shapely mountains, green with densest vegetation, fall gracefully down to the sea.

The land of the Crimea, where I spent some time in the summer of 1932, is described by a French writer as an "amethyst set in the emerald green of its wave-washed shores." Long known as the Soviet Riviera, it is the most popular place for recreation in the U.S.S.R. Before the war broke out, hundreds of thousands of workers went annually to the Crimea for their vacations. Hundreds of rest homes and sanitariums, bathing beaches and children's camps, dotted the peninsula. Nearly half of the Soviet Union's health resorts were in this Republic.

Not far inland from Sevastopol is the ancient capital of the Tatars, romantic Bakhchisarai, meaning "The Palace of Gardens." Tucked away in a deep valley among the lush Crimean mountains, it was the seat of the ruling khans for three centuries. In the khans' palace itself stands the "Fountain of Tears," built in memory of a beautiful Polish princess brought by an eighteenth century khan to his Moslem harem. According to legend, she was poisoned by one of the other and presumably less dazzling wives.

After visiting this old Tatar stronghold in 1820, Alexander Pushkin told the story of the princess in a colorful narrative poem entitled *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, depicting Tatar life and love in their golden age. The contemporary Soviet composer Assayev recently adapted this poem to a ballet. Under the Tsars the Crimean Tatars, like those of Kazan on the Volga, were comparatively advanced culturally for a minority people, but, as faithful worshipers of Allah, they followed the traditional customs of Islam. Typical Mohammedan mosques, monuments, and other structures in Bakhchisarai and Simferopol, present capital of the Republic, constantly remind one of a vanished social system and a vanishing religion.

The many ancient, medieval, and modern peoples who inhabited the Crimea at one time or other have left abundant traces, so that the region is a veritable paradise for archeologists.

Scythians and Greeks settled here as early as the seventh century B.C., and two centuries later Greek colonies had spread along the whole Crimean coastline. A considerable Greek minority still lives and works in this vicinity. In due course the peninsula came under the sway of the all-conquering Romans. With the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, this territory was taken over in turn by the Goths, Huns, Khazars, Mongols, Venetians, Tatars and Turks. The Ottoman Empire held the Crimea down to the last part of the eighteenth century, when it was annexed by imperial Russia and soon became known as "the first jewel in the crown of the Russian Tsar."

Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus

Pushkin was also inspired by the Caucasus, like a number of other Russian writers; and after spending a summer in the mountains, he wrote one of his most noted poems, *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*. The composer Assayev has based another ballet on this work. And the tribal dancing, the costumes, and the scenery are all so colorful and spirited in his production that it well supplements the original poem in giving one a vivid impression of the wild, vigorous existence led by the different Caucasian peoples amid the breath-taking natural surroundings of their native land. The heroine is one of those big-eyed Cherkessian damsels so widely famed for their beauty and much sought after for the harems of sultans and khans.

The Cherkessians inhabit the small Cherkess Autonomous Region in the rolling foothills of the Caucasus Mountains near the southern border of the Russian Republic. In the old days, however, no matter how beautiful a Cherkessian woman, she was completely subordinated by tradition and practice to the life of the male. Curiously enough she was not allowed to wait on table or milk cows, apparently because her touch was supposed to contaminate food. But while the Cherkessian men enjoyed the excitement of riding and fighting through this region

so admirably adapted to hit-and-run raiding, there was no doubt that their women had the privilege of doing the heavy work like reaping and threshing.

In this remote area of Caucasian valleys and mountains, with eight peaks loftier than any summit of the Swiss Alps, there exists a complex racial mosaic, a veritable modern Babel, that defies all description. "Mountain of Languages" is what the Arabs called the Caucasus. Here live the variegated fragments of ancient peoples who, trying to migrate further into Europe, became stranded long ago in the difficult terrain or were pushed back into the highlands by the inhabitants to the north. The many different ethnic groups in the Caucasus today are mainly Mohammedan in religion and, like their cousins over the divide in the Transcaucasus, chiefly Japhetic in origin. Some anthropologists have claimed that this Caucasus region in general was the cradle of the white race; and in fact "Caucasian" has become the accepted word for designating the white peoples.

In his book *Soviet Journey*, Mr. Louis Fischer graphically describes the appearance of a typical young Soviet Caucasian. "He has green piercing eyes and 'Arrow Collar' features: curled lashes, eyebrows as if painted on, a long head, delicate long nose, sharp angles in his lips, angular chin, a marked angle where jaw meets cheek bone. Red-tinted cheek contrasts with bluish jaw. On his head is a flat karakul cap with sides sloping outward. . . . He wears a thin, pressed-woolen tunic from neck to knee. Broad shoulders, and very narrow waist held firm by a narrow leather belt from which hangs a silver-tipped dagger scabbard. The dimensions of the chest are exaggerated by two breast pockets with cigarlike partitions containing wooden silver-headed pegs which now substitute for the real ammunition of Tsarist days.

"These Caucasians walk on their toes, lightly, like ballet dancers. But the real delight comes in seeing them ride. They were born in saddles. Many have certainly died in saddles. In cool seasons, they wear huge black fleece capes which hang from

the square, pointed shoulders down to the animal's hind quarters. When the rider races over the fields the cape flies in the air, his white neckscarf flaps in the wind, and horse and man together look like a creature from another world." ⁶

In the Russian Caucasus, in addition to the Cherkess territory already mentioned, there are two other Autonomous Regions and four Autonomous Republics. From an economic viewpoint the most important of these are the Adygei Region, with rich oil fields at and around its capital, Maikop, which was occupied by the Nazis in 1942; and the Chechen-Ingush Republic, which has even more extensive oil deposits at and near its capital, Grozny, to which the German armies did not quite penetrate.

Of all the native inhabitants of the Caucasus, the virile and liberty-loving Chechens put up the most determined resistance against the advance of the Russian colossus from the north during the nineteenth century. For sixty years they kept up the struggle from their mountain fastnesses and hide-outs against the numerically powerful armies of the Tsars. Their fellow peoples of the mountains also fought fiercely against the invader, and the rugged Kabardino-Balkarians staged a revolt against Nicholas II as late as 1912.

The Kabardino-Balkarian A.S.S.R., most of which Hitler overran for a short time, is the Caucasian Republic that has probably made the most outstanding cultural and economic progress since 1917. Though a most backward agricultural region under the Tsars, farming and cattle-raising in this Republic have been almost completely collectivized, while modern irrigation techniques have made great strides. During one recent dry summer the Kabardino-Balkarians, using the slogan "We have mountains; we don't need rain!" turned out by the thousands to dig ditches for the channeling of the downrushing Caucasian streams.

Kabardino-Balkaria is noted for its radioactive mineral springs, which attract health-seekers from all over the Soviet Union.

And in its southern reaches this Republic can boast of the highest peak on the European continent, Mt. Elbruz, 18,468 feet above sea level. The vigorous sport of mountain-climbing, which has become quite popular in the U.S.S.R., is centered in this vicinity.

Next door to the Kabardino-Balkarians, in an equally mountainous region of somber crags and canyons, live the Ossetians, with their North Ossetian Autonomous Republic in the Russian S.F.S.R. and a South Ossetian Autonomous Region in the Georgian Republic over the divide. Unlike the other peoples of the Caucasus and Transcaucasus, the Ossetians are of Iranian stock. For more than a thousand years, until overwhelmed by the Tsarist hosts, they held their mountain valleys and passes against innumerable enemies, turning every farm and village into a well-fortified point with sturdy walls and towers.

Traditionally herdsmen and shepherds tending their livestock on the grassy meadows of the Caucasus highlands, the Ossetians developed a characteristic form of architecture consisting of two-storied stone houses, the first floor for the cattle and the second for the peasant family. The leading Ossetian town was Vladikavkaz, meaning "Mistress of the Caucasus," which later became the capital of the Autonomous Republic under the name of Ordzhonikidze, a deceased Georgian Communist formerly prominent in the Soviet Government.

Recently, in February, 1944, the name of this city was officially changed back to Vladikavkaz in its Ossetian form, *Dzauzhikau*, in a special order of the Soviet Government reading as follows: "The Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., to comply with the request of the Sovnarkom of the North Ossetian A.S.S.R., decrees renaming the capital of North Ossetia, the city of Ordzhonikidze, the city of *Dzauzhikau*." This is a good example of how far Soviet policy goes in giving priority to the native languages within the minority regions.

Largest and most populous of the minority Republics in the Caucasus is that of Daghestan, meaning "Land of the Moun-

tains." Here the typical native village or *aul*, utilizing every protective feature of nature, is located on some seemingly impregnable height or in some quite inaccessible valley. This A.S.S.R. takes in a sizeable portion of the southeastern Caucasian range and extends along the Caspian Sea for 200 miles. National hero of Daghestan is the warrior-priest Shamil, "The Thunderbolt," leader in the struggle against Tsarist conquest who became celebrated in song and story throughout the entire Caucasian region.

The Daghestan Republic has a population of almost 1,000,000 made up of no less than thirty-two different peoples, each speaking its own particular dialect. The leading male character in a recent popular Soviet motion picture was a handsome shepherd from the high, alpine slopes of Daghestan; and the plot revolved around the inability of his sweetheart near Moscow to find anyone who could translate the all but unknown language in which his letters were written.

The Daghestan Republic constitutes a vital link in the oil transport system of the Soviet Union, since from its capital, Makhach-Kala, there run to Rostov-on-Don and Astrakhan branches of the main railway north from Baku. An oil pipe line also connects the Grozny oil fields with Makhach-Kala.

One of the lesser minorities in the Russian Republic that has no particular territory of its own, yet should be mentioned, is the Gypsies. In the old Tsarist days Gypsies made a precarious living from various arts, including begging and horse-stealing. They were terribly persecuted by the Government, and put under special police surveillance as criminals and excluded from all cities. Since 1917 the Soviet Government has made a determined effort to bring this ancient, nomadic people of Indian origin under the stabilizing influences of socialist civilization and to extend to them the benefits of the new regime. Out of about 100,000 Gypsies inhabiting the U.S.S.R.,



MOSCOW—WORKERS IN GORKY PARK



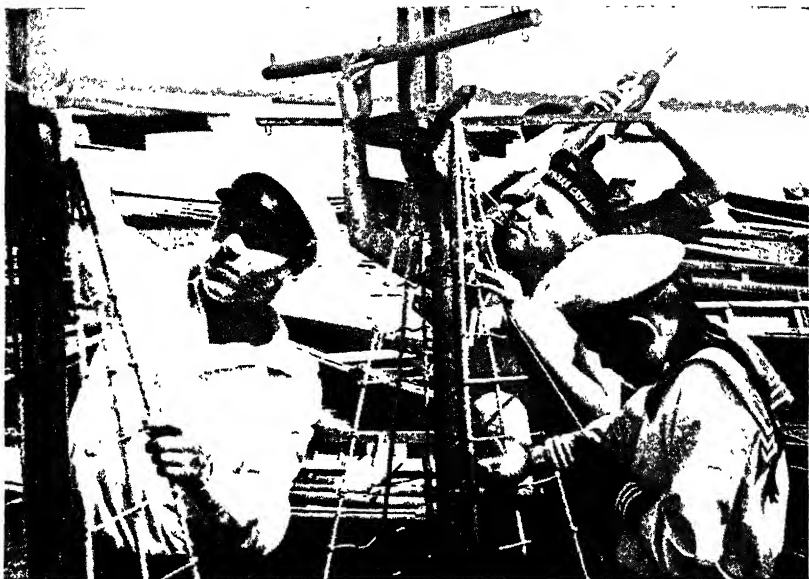
Leningrad TEXTILE WORKERS



A UKRAINIAN FOLK DANCE



BESSARABIA—AN ARMAN BRINGS THE NEWS



CHUVASH BOYS LEARNING NAVIGATION ON THE VOLGA



A STALINGRAD WORKER MAKES TRENCH STOVES



MOSCOW REGION—COLLECTIVE FARMERS



LENINGRAD—NEVSKY AVENUE



A WORKER IN THE KIROV PLANT, LENINGRAD



UKRAINE—FARMER ON A JEWISH COLLECTIVE



A KALMYK SAILOR

most have definitely given up their roving habits of life and have settled down to regular work.

Large numbers of Gypsies are employed in industry and in producers' co-operatives. Many have entered the professions. Thousands more have joined special Gypsy collective farms, especially in the Ukraine and Moldavia. In 1926 a written Gypsy alphabet was created and schools opened in the Gypsy language, including as many as twenty-five primary schools. Literary works, textbooks and other publications are published in the Gypsy tongue. In Moscow there are upwards of 4,000 Gypsies who maintain a youth club and a drama group, the Romany Theatre, which tours the country as well as playing in the Soviet capital. The Gypsy players are noted for their intense and colorful acting, their vital and heart-warming love songs.

It seems likely, however, that as time goes on the great majority of the Gypsies will become assimilated by the different Soviet nationalities among whom they live. Their steadily increasing participation in the main currents of Soviet life points to this conclusion and so do the census figures. Between the only Tsarist census, that of 1897, and the Soviet census of 1926 the number of Gypsies went up by 88.8 per cent, but those speaking the Gypsy language by only 22.9 per cent. This clearly indicates that the Gypsies have been adopting the languages of other Soviet peoples and tending to let their own tongue and cultural tradition sink into discard.

Alexander Pushkin's poem *The Gypsies*, one of his finest literary achievements, brings out once more the extent to which Russian and Soviet writers and artists have pictured in their creative work the life of the minority peoples. Into this verse tale of a Gypsy band and its camp on the open steppe Pushkin weaves a drama of love, jealousy and final tragedy. At least part of the poem is based on first-hand experience, since Pushkin himself had a passionate affair with a beautiful Gypsy girl whom

he met in Bessarabia, now part of the Moldavian Republic. But the sort of wild and wandering Gypsy existence that Pushkin immortalized and that seems so romantic to many city dwellers is now, in the Soviet Union, fast becoming a thing of the past.

From this survey of the minority peoples in the European part of the Russian S.F.S.R., seventeen of whom are formally organized,* we readily see that European Russia alone has a complex ethnical make-up that seems bewildering at first glance. And in the Asiatic or Siberian portion of the Russian Republic a similar racial and national diversity prevails, with fourteen minorities definitely organized on their own territories. If, finally, we count in all the smaller peoples and tribes, the number of different ethnic groups in the Russian S.F.S.R. comes to more than 150.

* As this book goes to press, it has been officially revealed that during the Nazi-Soviet war four of these national divisions were dissolved, owing either to collaboration with the enemy or to special movements of population. The units in question are the Chechen-Ingush, Crimean, and Kalmyk Autonomous Republics and the Karachai Autonomous Region. These divisions possessed a combined population of slightly over 2,000,000. All this is apart from the abolition of the Volga German A.S.S.R. already mentioned.

Another last-minute development in the affairs of the Russian Republic is its incorporation, through the partition of East Prussia between Poland and the Soviet Union, of the northeast third of that German province, including the big Baltic port of Königsberg. This new district is not contiguous to the rest of the Russian S.F.S.R.

CHAPTER III

THE OTHER PEOPLES OF SOVIET EUROPE

The Ukraine and Byelo-Russia

THE SECOND richest and second most populous Union Republic of the U.S.S.R. is that of the Ukraine, a green and pleasant land where nature is friendly, the climate mellow, the people markedly gay, and fond of song and dance. The Ukrainian S.S.R. is larger than all of France in size and, with approximately 42,000,000 inhabitants in 1941, fully equal to France in population. It contains one-fifth of the inhabitants of the whole Soviet Union and is the most densely populated of all the Union Republics. The actual meaning of Ukraine is "Borderland." Its people are sometimes called Little Russians, though as a rule they are slightly taller than the Great Russians. They also are darker-complexioned.

The Ukrainians have a highly developed indigenous culture of their own stretching far back into history and have maintained their national identity despite repeated invasion and dismemberment. The famous novelist and dramatist, Nicholas Gogol, was a Ukrainian, though he wrote in the Russian language; while Taras Shevchenko, persecuted by Tsar Nicholas II for daring to write in his native tongue, is the recognized national poet of the country. Marshal Kliment Voroshilov, a leading figure in the Red Army and Soviet Government from the earliest days, is also associated with the Ukraine, since he was born there, of Russian parents, in an industrial city of the Donets Basin. That city was later renamed after him as Voro-

shilovgrad. Marshal Timoshenko is a Ukrainian and likewise the late General Chernyakhovsky. Two of the most eminent Soviet scientists, Alexander Bogomolets and Trofim Lysenko, come from the Ukraine, as well as Nicholas Burdenko, chief surgeon of the Red Army.

The Ukrainian Republic acquired important new domains and some 7,000,000 citizens in the fall of 1939, when the preponderantly Ukrainian population of southeastern Poland voted to become part of it and the Soviet Union. This enlargement of Soviet boundaries took place shortly after the Red Army marched into Eastern Poland, thus preventing Nazi occupation following Hitler's decisive defeat of the Poles. In the summer of 1940 the Ukrainian S.S.R. absorbed still more territory and at least another million people when the U.S.S.R. occupied the province of Bessarabia, stolen by Rumania back in 1918, and Northern Bukovina, which had never been part of Russia but which was primarily Ukrainian in population.

The Ukrainian Republic at this time incorporated all of Northern Bukovina and from Bessarabia a bit of land in the northwest of the province as well as a strip of the Black Sea coast ranging from fifty to seventy-five miles in width. This coastal strip extends from the mouth of the Dniester River, which served as the old Soviet-Romanian boundary line, to the northernmost mouth of the Danube, largest river in Europe next to the Volga and of great commercial and strategic importance for the entire Balkan area. The re-establishment of Soviet-Ukrainian control for more than a hundred miles along the north bank of the lower Danube is an economic and political factor of prime significance.

In June, 1945, the Czechoslovak Government ceded to the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian Republic the province of Carpatho-Ukraine, or Ruthenia, a heavily forested, mountainous strip of land at the eastern tip of Czechoslovakia. The Carpatho-Ukraine is close to Connecticut in size and has a

population of about 725,000, of whom some 500,000 are Ukrainians. The official pact states that the cession took place "according to the wish manifested by the population of the Carpatho-Ukraine" to "unite with its long-standing motherland, the Ukraine." It was also agreed that up till January 1, 1946, Czechs and Slovaks living in the Carpatho-Ukraine could transfer to Czechoslovak citizenship and that Russians or Ukrainians living in Czechoslovakia could transfer to Soviet citizenship.

The Carpatho-Ukraine, ever a sore spot in Eastern Europe, was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the First World War. At the end of the war the Ukrainians in this region were already agitating to join the U.S.S.R. Twenty years later it was these half-million Ukrainians whom Hitler hoped to exploit as the nucleus of an "independent" Ukraine detached from the Soviet Union and functioning as an important unit in the New Order. The acquisition of the Carpatho-Ukraine by the U.S.S.R. creates a common border with Hungary.

The Ukrainian S.S.R. boasts immense modern industrial developments, huge mineral deposits of coal and iron ore and, in its big rivers like the Dnieper, the Bug, and the Dniester, untold reserves of water-power. Its economic assets include most of the rich Donets Basin (the Donbas); the great Dnieper Dam at Zaporozhye; and the three important cities of Kiev, its beautiful capital and also capital of the first Russian state centuries ago, Kharkov, railway junction and machine-building center, and Odessa, key Black Sea port and scene of a crushing Nazi defeat in April, 1944.

The agricultural resources of the Ukraine, with its mild climate, ample rainfall, and broad rivers, are perhaps even more substantial than the industrial. Its fertile "black earth" made it traditionally the bread-basket for all of Russia and Europe; but the Soviet regime, especially since the Nazi war, has developed other great wheat-growing areas. The Ukraine has

definitely become the Soviet sugar bowl. It produces many other food crops on a vast scale; raises millions of head of cattle, pigs and sheep; and is famed for its high-grade orchards of apples, plums and cherries.

This is the smiling, heart-warming land where, as Leo Tolstoy said, "the rivers flow brighter than silver, where the gentle wind rustles the tall grasses and the farm buildings are lost in cherry groves." The flat, rolling plains of the Ukraine, wavy with ripening wheat, stretch away into the distance like the rippling sea. These unbroken, undulating fields, which I found so reminiscent of America's Middle Western prairies, are ideal for the mechanization and collectivization of agriculture based on the use of modern tractors and harvester combines. Virtually all of the Ukrainian peasants are organized into collective farms.

The Ukrainian Republic suffered more than any other Soviet territory from the German invasion. Hitler's armies, aided by substantial Hungarian and Romanian forces, overran almost the whole of the Ukraine during the first six months of the war and held large sections of this region until the spring of 1944. Millions of Ukrainians were forced into slave labor by the Germans; millions more were brutally slain. Because of its very wealth, the Nazis pillaged the Ukraine with utter thoroughness. And the entire Republic was laid waste either through the ravages of the invader or through the scorched earth policy of the Soviets themselves.

The most striking single manifestation of that policy was the blowing up of the Dnieper Dam, magnificent life-giving creation of the Soviet workers' toil and sacrifice. This dramatic symbol of Soviet up-building during the Five-Year Plans was finally transformed by its destruction in August of 1941 into a symbol of unyielding Soviet resistance to our common foe. A little more than two years later, in the fall of 1943, the Red Army drove the Germans out of the Dnieper River region and

took over the ruins of the dam. Almost immediately Soviet engineers started the difficult task of reconstructing it.

Third Union Republic in population is that of Byelo-Russia, founded in 1919, almost exactly the size of America's Kansas and having 10,500,000 inhabitants. It seems probable that the Slav people of this Republic originally came to be called Byelo-Russians, meaning "White Russians," because of their clothes rather than because they happen to be the fairest in complexion of the three main Slavic groups. Conspicuous in the native costume are the white smock, white leggings and white homespun coat. There are few large cities in this Byelo-Russian S.S.R., the most sizeable being Minsk, the capital. The economy of Byelo-Russia centers around agriculture, particularly the growing of flax, hemp, and potatoes; and light industry, particularly the production of textile goods and clothing.

Much of the Byelo-Russian Republic is forest and swamp-land, which includes the bulk of the famous Pripet Marshes that hid tens of thousands of guerrillas during the war with the Nazis. In her colorful book *Peoples of the U.S.S.R.*, Anna Louise Strong describes life up until recently in the harsh Pripet region: "In that monotonous marshland—it is called Polesia—each tiny hamlet is shut off from its neighbors for most of the year. During spring floods they go from island to island in canoes driven by sail or paddle or pulled across shallows by long-horned oxen. In summer they cannot travel at all. Only when winter freezes the marshes is there firm travel over the snow. Then peasants venture out to trade their scanty harvest for salt, matches, and a bit of cotton goods. Matches are so precious that they are split into four parts before being struck. Salt is so precious that the salt water in which potatoes have been boiled is kept for many boilings for weeks."¹

Since 1917, however, the Byelo-Russians have set to work with Faustlike energy to drain their swamps and transform them into pastures and collective farms. At present they are carrying

out a fifteen-year plan that calls for the reclamation of more than 15,000 square miles of swampland, an area larger than all of Holland. They have already made enormous headway in this enterprise and have built excellent roads over the formerly almost impassable marshes. The bogs are also yielding up much natural wealth, including fine peat for fuel and fertilizer.

Like the Ukraine, Byelo-Russia suffered the most brutal oppression during the Nazi occupation. The whole Republic was occupied by Hitler's storm troops from the autumn of 1941 till the summer of 1943; and most of it was not liberated from the Germans until the summer of 1944. During these fearful years the Byelo-Russian guerrillas made an outstanding record for themselves. Operating in conjunction with the central command of the People's Avengers, the name for the Soviet partisans in general, the Byelo-Russians killed about 300,000 of the German invaders, including fifty generals and high officials. In the so-called "war of rails" they seriously disrupted enemy transportation by derailing 6,000 trains, wrecking 50,000 railway cars and blowing up 1,400 kilometers of track. They also destroyed approximately 1,000 Nazi tanks and about 11,000 trucks. As a result of conspicuous bravery and effectiveness, more than 45,000 Byelo-Russian guerrilla commanders and fighters received special military decorations.

One of those awarded the title of "Hero of the Soviet Union" was a woman, Anna Mosloskaya, who blew up with dynamite the leaders of a German garrison. The official Soviet report describes the exploit in these words: "Learning that a conference of officers had been called in a certain city to discuss ways and means of wiping out her guerrilla detachment, Anna went alone to the city and when the debate was at its height exploded a mine under the building, settling the argument."²

Byelo-Russia almost doubled in area and population when, in October, 1939, the people of northeastern Poland voted to join this Republic and the U.S.S.R. The long-existing Polish minor-

ity within Byelo-Russia was considerably increased by this step. As in the case of the Ukraine, this extension of Soviet sovereignty occurred following the Red Army's occupation of eastern Poland and while large contingents of it were still stationed there.

The lands incorporated in the autumn of 1939 by the Byelo-Russian and Ukrainian Republics had for eighteen years comprised eastern Poland and were inhabited by an overwhelming majority—close to 70 per cent—of Byelo-Russians and Ukrainians. A careful analysis of the 1931 Polish census and the Polish Government's own *Little Statistical Yearbook* of 1938 makes this evident. Except for the small portion of eastern Poland known as East Galicia, which belonged till 1918 to Austria-Hungary, this entire territory was part of the Russian Empire before the First World War. Then, under the harsh Treaty of Riga in 1921, the predominantly Byelo-Russian and Ukrainian sections were taken away from a weakened and exhausted Soviet Union by the Polish imperialists after their war of aggression against the socialist state. At the time, even the anti-Soviet Allies protested against Poland's grabbing so much land and population that was obviously non-Polish.

In fact, before the Soviet-Polish war broke out, the Supreme Council of Allied Powers had recommended as a just basis for a frontier settlement the so-called Curzon Line, which was first officially proposed at a meeting in 1919 presided over by America's Under-Secretary of State, Frank L. Polk. Indeed, the suggested boundary at the beginning was sometimes referred to as the "Curzon-Polk Line." The new Soviet-Polish frontier of 1939, along most of its 400-odd miles, was fairly close to this line. And at the Crimea Conference in 1945 President Roosevelt, Premier Stalin and Prime Minister Churchill agreed that the permanent Soviet-Polish boundary should follow the Curzon Line, with its extension south into East Galicia and with certain rectifications in favor of Poland. The Poles also received "sub-

stantial accessions of territory in the north and west" from Germany, including some two-thirds of East Prussia and more than 300 miles of the Baltic coastline. In August, 1945, the Soviet and Polish Governments signed a special accord ratifying the Curzon Line frontier.

It is simply impossible to draw boundaries in eastern Europe that conform completely to ethnic divisions. Thus in the disputed area on the Soviet side of the Curzon Line there were in 1939 approximately 5,000,000 Ukrainians, 2,500,000 Byelo-Russians, 2,500,000 Poles, and 1,000,000 Jews. Mutual interchanges of population, however, can do much to eliminate friction over isolated islands of nationals outside the country of origin and choice. And following the defeat of Germany, remarkably thorough movements of repatriation took place between the Byelo-Russian and Ukrainian Republics, on the one hand, and Poland on the other. Whatever Polish minority remains within the U.S.S.R. will enjoy the same rights of language and cultural autonomy as the other Soviet nationalities.

The Five Newest Union Republics

During the first year of the Second World War the Soviet Union, besides recovering lost territories of the Ukraine and Byelo-Russia, established five new Union Republics: the Karelo-Finnish, the Estonian, the Latvian, the Lithuanian, and the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republics. Ever since these Republics were set up in 1940, heated controversies have raged as to whether the territories and populations involved actually belong to the U.S.S.R. But there can be no doubt that the Soviet Government and the Soviet people definitely consider these lands as part of their country and regard the question as settled. All five of the new Republics were liberated from the German Army in 1944.

The Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. entered the Soviet federation of

peoples as the twelfth Union Republic directly subsequent to the Soviet-Finnish peace settlement of March, 1940, which concluded the unhappy winter war between Finland and Soviet Russia. Under this treaty the Soviet Union received the town of Viipuri and the entire Karelian Isthmus just north of Leningrad. These terms thereby increased the distance between the Finnish frontier and Soviet Russia's second city from the former twenty miles to about 100. The U.S.S.R. also acquired the northwestern half and the northwestern shores of Lake Ladoga, the largest lake in all Europe, as well as a narrow strip of land somewhat farther north.

Thus territorial gains of approximately 16,000 square miles were added to the former Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which had been part of the Russian Republic since 1923, to establish the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. This is greater in size than all of New England. Most of the approximately 400,000 inhabitants of the annexed region fled to Finland when the Soviets came in. Accordingly the population of the new Republic is estimated as about 500,000, the smallest of any Union Republic in the U.S.S.R.

It should be recalled that the whole of Finland was annexed by Tsarist Russia in 1809, though it always maintained semi-autonomy. Shortly after Nicholas II was overthrown in March, 1917, the Finnish Diet demanded freedom from the Russian Provisional Government in all matters except defense and the control of foreign affairs. But the regime headed by Alexander Kerensky refused this request. Less than a month after the November Revolution the Finns declared their complete and unqualified independence. And on January 4, 1918, the Soviet Government recognized the full independence of Finland, both Lenin and Stalin supporting the country's right to self-determination, even to the point of secession. Relations between the Finnish Republic and the Soviet Union, however, always remained somewhat strained, and culminated in military hostilities during World War II.

When in 1941 Finland joined Hitler in his invasion of the Soviet Union, and became engaged in its second war with the U.S.S.R., Finnish and Nazi troops pushed into the Karelo-Finnish Republic and took over much of its southern portion. The invaders fought their way as far east as Lake Onega, capturing Petrozavodsk, capital of the Republic, and cutting the strategic Leningrad-Murmansk railway, built in 1916 by the Tsarist Government. Under the 1944 armistice agreement signed by the Soviet, British and Finnish Governments, the 1940 boundaries were restored to the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R.

This Republic is a land of shimmering lakes, rushing waterfalls, and teeming animal life. Dense, beautiful forests of pine, fir, and birch cover two-thirds of its area, so that timber is naturally the basis of its economy and the manufacture of paper and cellulose highly developed. Gloomy but valuable peat-bogs supply excellent fuel. Agriculture, centering around dairy farming and the raising of vegetables, thrives in the southern districts. The Finns and Karelians are of sturdy Finno-Ugrian stock. From their centuries-old epic poem, *Kalevala*, with its typical runic form, Longfellow borrowed the rhythm for *Hiawatha*, which has so enchanted generations of Americans.

The Karelo-Finnish Republic was the scene of the construction of the crucial section, from Lake Onega to the White Sea, of the Stalin White Sea-Baltic Canal. This great inland waterway, with its northeastern outlet in Karelo-Finnish territory and its southwestern outlet on the Gulf of Finland, opened up the whole region to further economic exploitation. And it brought Leningrad and Archangel more than 2,000 miles closer as compared with the old ocean route via the Atlantic. The Canal, deep enough and wide enough for small warships, was finished in 1933 and constituted one of the most impressive achievements of the Five-Year Plans. It was built almost entirely by convicts and political prisoners, many of whom were highly rewarded for their excellent work. Three hundred won scholar-

ships for special studies, 12,000 were amnestied, and 59,000 had their sentences materially reduced.

Along the southern shores of the Gulf of Finland and facing west to the Baltic Sea lies the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, which became part of the U.S.S.R. in 1940. In mid-June of that year, as France was crumbling under the Nazi blitzkrieg, Soviet troops marched into the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania following the violation by their vacillating governments of their mutual-aid pacts with the U.S.S.R. This Soviet move definitely forestalled Hitler, who all along had been casting covetous eyes in the direction of these weak and strategically situated nations. A few weeks after the Soviet military occupation, newly elected parliaments in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania proclaimed their countries Soviet Socialist Republics; and in August these were officially admitted into the U.S.S.R. by its Supreme Soviet.

The Baltic Republics then proceeded to nationalize the largest industrial enterprises and to distribute among individual peasants the remaining big estates as well as numerous grants from lands previously taken over by the state. But they attempted no far-reaching measures in regard to small business or agriculture in general and on the whole moved rather cautiously. Meanwhile the German Government carried through the transference to the Reich of about 130,000 German-speaking people who lived in the Baltic countries.

The Baltic socialist regimes had been in power for less than a year when Hitler's onslaught came and submerged them in the very first month of the attack. The Nazis incorporated the entire Baltic area into their "New Order" as Ostland (Eastern Territory), remaining in occupation until the summer of 1944. During these three bitter years the Baltic populations endured all the cruelties and indignities of Nazi terror and at the same time steadily harassed the invader with guerrilla warfare.

It was not the first time, however, that these peoples had suffered from German oppression. From as far back as the twelfth century and right through the First World War, the Baltic littoral was the scene of constant invasion and conquest, with Danes, Swedes, Germans, Poles, and Russians all playing a part during 700 years of strife. But from the early thirteenth century on, it was the Germans who largely held the whip hand and were able to dominate the situation. For even during the seventeenth century when Sweden was the controlling power in the Baltic and after 1721 when it was Tsarist Russia, the German Baltic Barons remained the ruling class and treated the native population as serfs. In fact the Russian Tsars always relied primarily on these Teuton aristocrats to control the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian peoples and to suppress their national aspirations.

Tsar Peter the Great conquered Estonia and Latvia in 1721, while Catherine the Great annexed Lithuania in 1795. "I seek not land, but the sea," cried Peter, giving succinct expression to Russia's age-long and imperative need for a warm-water outlet to the ocean. Except for remote Murmansk, the only year-round, ice-free ports that Tsarist Russia had in the west directly accessible to the mainstream of commerce in the North Atlantic were on the Baltic. Prior to the First World War almost one-third of the Russian Empire's exports and imports went through these busy harbors. And there can be little question that economically and historically, in so far as two centuries of history count for something, the Baltic States belonged with Russia and Russia with them.

It is essential, therefore, to recall that the Baltic provinces were lost to the Soviet Union during its early years when it was struggling for its very life. The independent governments of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were first set up in 1918 with the aid of the Kaiser's armies and in line with the harsh Treaty of Brest-Litovsk formalizing Germany's conquests from Russia

and her spheres of influence in eastern Europe. The Allies later recognized the Baltic governments, wishing to see them maintained permanently as part of a "cordon sanitaire" to isolate the U.S.S.R. from a diplomatic, economic, and military standpoint. The idea was a "policy of barbed-wire entanglements from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea," in the apt words of Premier Clemenceau of France.

The artificial separation of the Baltic States from the U.S.S.R. at the end of World War I and for twenty-two years thereafter proved an immense handicap to the Soviet Union and disrupted the economies of those three countries themselves. To quote Mr. Gregory Meiksin, author of *The Baltic Riddle* and himself a native Latvian: "In pre-war times, Latvia and Estonia had been among the most industrialized provinces of all the Russias. Their railway development was extensive. There were metal, rubber, textile, shipbuilding, and canning plants in the big centers like Riga, Tallinn, and Liepaja. Riga alone had 90,000 workers out of a population slightly under half a million.

"Raw materials had flowed to the fabricating and industrial plants on the Baltic shores. . . . Now, torn away from their natural bond with the interior, the industries of the Baltic withered. Vacant buildings became the rule. Machinery became scrap. . . . The Baltic countries had become dependent on the British and German markets, all the more so since the decay of their internal economies, the ruination of industry and the degradation of living standards had taken the bottom out of the home market. Unable to revive a home market, and unable to compete industrially with German and British economies, Baltic economy was forced into a one-sided, unnatural dependence on agriculture." ³

Returning to the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, smallest of the Baltic States, we find that in area it is more than twice as large as New Jersey, though it has a population of only

1,120,000. The geographical location of Estonia makes it of prime importance in the defensive strategy of the Soviet Union. For the northern shore of this Republic skirts the Gulf of Finland for 200 miles and throughout half of this distance is only 50 miles from Finland itself. Hence whoever holds Estonia is in a good position to control the approaches to Leningrad and to bottle up the squadrons of the Soviet fleet based on that great port.

Furthermore, near Narva, ancient city recaptured from the Nazis by the Russians in May, 1944, the Estonian frontier is less than 100 miles from Leningrad, while further south it bisects the length of Lake Peipus, a traditional defense barrier of northern Russia. It was here that in 1242 Prince Alexander Nevski won his famous victory over the Teutonic Knights of the Livonian Order, driving the invaders back over the frozen lake in which thousands of their heavily armored horse and foot soldiery drowned when the ice suddenly collapsed under their weight.

The Estonian people belong to the Finno-Ugrian family and are ethnically distinct from the Latvians (or Letts) and the Lithuanians to the south. Of the gainfully employed in Estonia, over two-thirds were engaged in agriculture and fishing prior to World War II. This Republic's largest city and capital is Tallinn, meaning "The Danish Town," northward-looking port on the western end of the Gulf of Finland opposite Finland's capital, Helsinki. Tallinn is usually accessible to shipping during the entire year, though sometimes ice-breakers are temporarily necessary.

The Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, biggest of the Baltic States, is the size of West Virginia. Its population numbers nearly 2,000,000 and is of the same Indo-European ethnic strain as the Lithuanians. The language of both these peoples is close to Old Sanskrit. In religion the Latvians are predominantly Lutheran. Latvia includes the ancient provinces of Livonia,



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Latgale and Kurland, all of which figured extensively in the history of this region.

While predominantly agricultural, with the emphasis on dairy farming, Latvia is more highly industrialized than either Estonia or Lithuania. Its capital is the port of Riga, largest city of the Baltic nations. Situated on the Gulf of Riga it is ice-bound from December to March, but two smaller Latvian harbors, Ventspils (Windau) and Liepaja (Libau), lie on the Baltic Sea proper and are ice-free the year round. One of the severest losses of the war in the Baltic area occurred when the Germans wantonly burned down the Riga City Library, founded in 1524, and destroyed almost 800,000 books, periodicals, manuscripts, and other items. This was in line with the conscious Nazi policy of stamping out so far as possible the national cultures of the Baltic and other conquered peoples.

The Lithuanian S.S.R. is a little smaller than Latvia, but has a population of over 3,000,000, predominantly Catholic in religion. Of all the Baltic peoples the Lithuanians have had the stormiest career, having been able during the fifteenth century, in conjunction with the Kingdom of Poland, to establish temporarily a "Greater Lithuania" extending far to the east and south of the country's more recent boundaries. Later, being a dual State with Poland, Lithuania became involved in the three partitions of Poland during the eighteenth century and was taken over entirely by Tsarist Russia.

The capital of the Lithuanian Republic is Vilnius, which was annexed forcibly by the Poles in 1920 and returned to Lithuania by the Soviet Union in 1939 when it re-acquired eastern Poland. Another serious bone of contention in this general vicinity has been the port of Memel, which belonged to Germany before the First World War and was finally awarded in 1924 to Lithuania by the League of Nations. Hitler seized this convenient Lithuanian outlet on the Baltic early in 1939, but the Lithuanians received it back after the defeat of the Nazis in

1945. At the same time a small strip of territory inland from Memel and largely Lithuanian in population also went to the Lithuanian Republic.

Lithuania's economy, even more than that of its Baltic neighbors to the north, is centered around agriculture, especially the breeding of dairy cattle and the cultivation of cereal crops. Lithuanian culture has roots deep in the past and its literature is rich in popular ballads, folk tales and works of a religious character. As in Latvia, a fresh cultural upsurge took place with the revival of national traditions at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This resulted in what later became known as the Lithuanian Renaissance.

Far to the south near the Black Sea is the fifth of the new Union Republics. This is the Moldavian S.S.R., a little bigger than Holland and with a population of 2,300,000, closely related in language and culture to the Romanians. The picturesque capital of this Republic is Kishinev, where Alexander Pushkin, Russia's greatest poet, once lived in semi-exile for more than two years. Marshal Semyon Timoshenko, one of the outstanding Soviet generals, is also associated with Moldavia, since he was born there, of Ukrainian parents, in a little peasant village in which his brother Efim still lives.

The whole of the Moldavian S.S.R. was occupied by German and Romanian forces for three years, from the summer of 1941 to the summer of 1944. This Republic is primarily agricultural and is noted for its fruit and wines. Through it flows most of the lower Dniester River, while the Prut River serves as its southern border and separates it from Romania. Territorially the Moldavian S.S.R. is made up of the former Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which contained about 250,000 Moldavians organized under the Ukrainian Republic, and the major portion of Bessarabia. Since the southeastern section of Bessarabia was added to the Ukraine, Moldavia has no outlet on the Black Sea.

Ever since the early Christian era Bessarabia has been a fiercely contested battleground among a number of warlike peoples. This comparatively small province has seen in mortal combat the Bessi, a Thracian tribe that gave the region its name, the Goths, Huns, Mongols, Turks, Tatars, Russians, Romanians, Bulgarians, and Germans. In 1812 the Russian General Kutuzov, who a little later commanded the campaign against Napoleon, won Bessarabia from Turkey and it became an integral part of the Russian Empire for over a century—in fact, fifty-five years previous to Romania's establishment as an independent state. Nevertheless, in 1918, while the Soviet Union was much occupied in defending itself elsewhere, the Romanians forcibly took over Bessarabia. But this annexation was never recognized by the Soviet Government or even the United States; and official Soviet maps always included Bessarabia as rightfully belonging to the U.S.S.R.

As in the case of the Baltic States, Bessarabia's twenty-two years' separation from the Soviet Union proved very bad economically. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* asserts in an authoritative article: "The situation is disastrous to the commerce of both countries, but is particularly so for the province of Bessarabia, since the Dniester was formerly the main artery for Bessarabian grain and wool. Three Bessarabian railways were arranged to converge on Odessa, while the fourth linked with Akkerman (Cetatea Alba) and thence by sea with Odessa. The latter town formed the natural outlet for Bessarabian cereals, fruit and wine, which found a ready market in Russia, but which are less easily disposed of to agricultural Romania." ⁴

This discussion of Bessarabia completes our consideration of the Soviet Union's expansion in the west during 1939 and 1940. And I can do no better in conclusion than to quote the official statement by America's Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby, in 1920. Mr. Colby asserted that the United States Government "would regard with satisfaction a declaration by the

allied and associated powers that the territorial integrity and true boundaries of Russia shall be respected. These boundaries should properly include the whole of the former Russian Empire, with the exception of Finland proper, ethnic Poland, and such territory as may by agreement form a part of the Armenian state.”⁵

The question of Armenia soon became an academic one, since it early threw in its lot with the U.S.S.R. as a Soviet Socialist Republic. Thus the Soviet frontiers subsequent to the summer of 1940 conformed, with minor exceptions, to Secretary Colby's authoritative and altogether reasonable statement of policy.

Republics of the Transcaucasus

Just beyond the main range of the Caucasian Mountains and at the lower end of the isthmus that is the sole north-south land connection between Europe and Asia, lie the three Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republics of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaidzhan. They cover an area about the size of North Dakota and one that is composed chiefly of highlands and mountainous terrain. This comparatively small territory vies with the Caucasian region of the Russian Republic in containing an amazing diversity of climate, vegetation, economic wealth, and ethnic groups. The Azerbaidzhanians are Turco-Tatar in origin, while the Georgians and Armenians are Japhetic and closely related to the peoples across the mountains to the north.

It was to the Black Sea shores of Transcaucasia that Jason and his Argonauts, according to Greek mythology, sailed in quest of the Golden Fleece. They were supposed to have landed in Colchis, a fertile subtropical district still sometimes called by that name and situated along the Rion River in the Georgian Republic. Legend tells us, also, that to a wild mountain precipice in this general vicinity Prometheus was chained and eternally devoured by vultures for having made known to mankind the magic of fire.

These myths indicate that far back in ancient times the Transcaucasian isthmus was the scene of human activity and exploration. It is probable that here, in Georgia and Armenia, grew the oldest established civilizations that still exist on Soviet soil—much older than the civilization of the conquering Russians. Tsarist Russia took over the Transcaucasus during the nineteenth century in wars with the Persians, the Turks, and some of the native peoples. After the Revolution of 1917 this entire region became the scene of bloody conflict, control of it swaying back and forth for several years between the Bolsheviks, the counterrevolutionaries, and the foreign interventionists with their eyes on the rich oil fields of Baku.

The Soviets finally won out, and the three major nationalities established during 1920 and 1921 the Soviet Socialist Republics of Azerbaidzhan, Armenia, and Georgia under the general authority of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. This was one of the four original Union Republics that joined together in 1922 to form the U.S.S.R. In 1936 the three chief republics of the Transcaucasus graduated to the rank of full Union Republics and their special federation was dissolved.

In August of 1932 my wife and I drove from the Russian Republic into Transcaucasia over the magnificent Georgian Military Highway from Vladikavkaz, now renamed *Dzardzhikau* in the Ossetian tongue, to Tbilisi, capital of the Georgian S.S.R. The recent official change of this latter city's name from the Russian word, *Tiflis*, to the Georgian equivalent, *Tbilisi*, is another example of how Soviet policy helps to revitalize the national traditions of the minority peoples.

This automobile trip through the middle of the rugged, austere Caucasian Mountains was one of the most beautiful and exciting I have ever taken. And I well understood what the Russian poet Lermontov meant when he wrote, "To remember the Caucasus forever, you have only to go there once." Deep, foaming gorges dropped away sheer for hundreds of feet below the highway over which we passed; great soaring battlements

and columns, fashioned by nature, rose at every hand; while in the distance snow-clad Kazbek constantly appeared in changing guise around sudden turns in the road. One point of special interest that brought out the characteristic past of this region was the large number of ancient, ruined towers along the way. Built on steep and craggy heights, they served for centuries as watch turrets for this or that mountain tribe or village on the lookout for enemies.

When we had crossed over the highest pass on our route and were coming down into the lower altitudes of the Georgian Transcaucasus, we stopped at a little inn for a late lunch. There we ate a hearty meal of shashlik, a favorite Georgian dish consisting of small pieces of lamb roasted at the end of a spit and perhaps the outstanding contribution of the Soviet mountain peoples to the culinary art of the world. At the tables around us a number of colorfully dressed Georgians were feasting, drinking, and singing in their fine tenor voices. And we got a strong first impression of the gay, irrepressible, life-loving spirit of this mountain folk.

Cosmopolitan Tbilisi, where we arrived in the early evening, lies in a romantic setting with receding chains of mountains all about. It means literally "warm springs"—after its hot sulphur baths, long famed for their health-giving qualities. This city, with its milling, many-peopled throngs, is typical of the heterogeneous population of the Transcaucasus. And its quaint, time-worn little houses and narrow, crooked streets along the Kura River stand in striking contrast to the asphalted boulevards and up-to-date buildings of the more modern district. Tbilisi is in itself a dramatic example of that close interweaving of old and new which is so pervasive throughout the Soviet Union.

As capital of Georgia, Tbilisi is the chief city of a Soviet Republic less than one-half the area of America's State of Georgia and skirting the Turkish border for several hundred miles. Of this Republic's mixed population of over 3,700,000,

about two-thirds are Georgians, an ancient Japhetic people with a long-established culture who came to the Transcaucasus from Asia Minor as far back as 1000 B.C. They were converted to Christianity in 345 A.D., three centuries before the Anglo-Saxons. At the time of the 1917 Revolution Georgia was a backward land full of feudal survivals. Something like six per cent of the population, for example, called themselves princes.

Georgia's greatest poet, Rustaveli, wrote the country's national epic, *The Knight in the Tiger's Skin*, during the twelfth century. This was in the reign of Queen Tamara, Georgia's most renowned sovereign, with whom Rustaveli was said to have been madly in love. Tamara's ravishing beauty, her Amazonlike physical prowess and martial spirit, are still a flaming legend in this land.

Most famous of all Georgians today, however, is Generalissimo and Premier Joseph Stalin, who was born in 1879 near Tbilisi in the small town of Gori. Stalin's father, a worker in a leather factory, had the good Georgian name of Vissarion Dzhughashvili, Stalin of course being a pseudonym derived from the Russian word for "steel" and later adopted by the Soviet leader. The one-story brick house where Stalin and his family lived has been turned into a museum. In his teens Stalin attended a theological seminary in Tbilisi, but was expelled for revolutionary activity. In the mountains of northern Georgia is Stalinir, a city named after Stalin and capital of the South Ossetian Autonomous Region. Another outstanding native of Georgia is Lavrenti P. Beria, head of the Soviet Commissariat for Internal Affairs, the government department in charge of the dreaded political police and generally known as the NKVD.

In the sphere of economics the Georgian Republic is noted for its subtropical agriculture along the shores of the Black Sea; its far-reaching program of electrification through water-power; its production of tasty wines, which Georgians like to quaff from hollow rams' horns; and its mining of manganese, so vital to the manufacture of iron and steel. In the famous

Chiatura districts high up in the mountains there are large quantities of this rare mineral; and at one time Mr. W. Averell Harriman, present American Ambassador to Moscow, headed a syndicate that operated these manganese deposits on a concession basis. Half of the Soviet Union's output of manganese comes from Georgia, and before the war a good deal of it was exported from this district to the United States.

In 1937, on the twentieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, a contemporary Soviet writer summed up Georgia's past and present in the following prose poem:

"Beneath diamond sparkling glaciers, amid rustling forests, and the roar of chill rushing rivers, open to the Union's warmest sun and washed by its warmest sea, like a beautiful orchard blooms our Soviet Georgia.

"In ancient times the land of Rustaveli was the route of military conquerors. Her meadows were trampled by Egyptians and Assyrians. Alexander the Great threw bridges across her rivers to enable his troops to march to the East. Pompey's sword flashed in the rays of her sun. The green banner of the Osmons floated over her towns. The Genoese built fortresses on her shores. And the Tsarist double-eagle clawed at her heart. Princes nestled like vultures in their mountain fastnesses and robbed the poor and kindly folk.

"But the happy dream of liberty never died. It lived in joyous song, bubbled in the foam of wine and bloomed in April's almond blossoms. And at last the dream came true . . . and Georgia's sun became the sun of liberty." ⁶

The two major minorities in the Georgian S.S.R., the Adzharians and the Abkhazians, have their own Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics. Both the Adzharian and Abkhazian Republics are located in western Georgia and include much of the humid, subtropical Black Sea coast. Specialties of this region are the growing of tea, tobacco, the oriental tung-oil tree, citrus fruits, and a wide variety of subtropical plants. Batumi (formerly *Batum* in Russian), capital of Adzharia and within

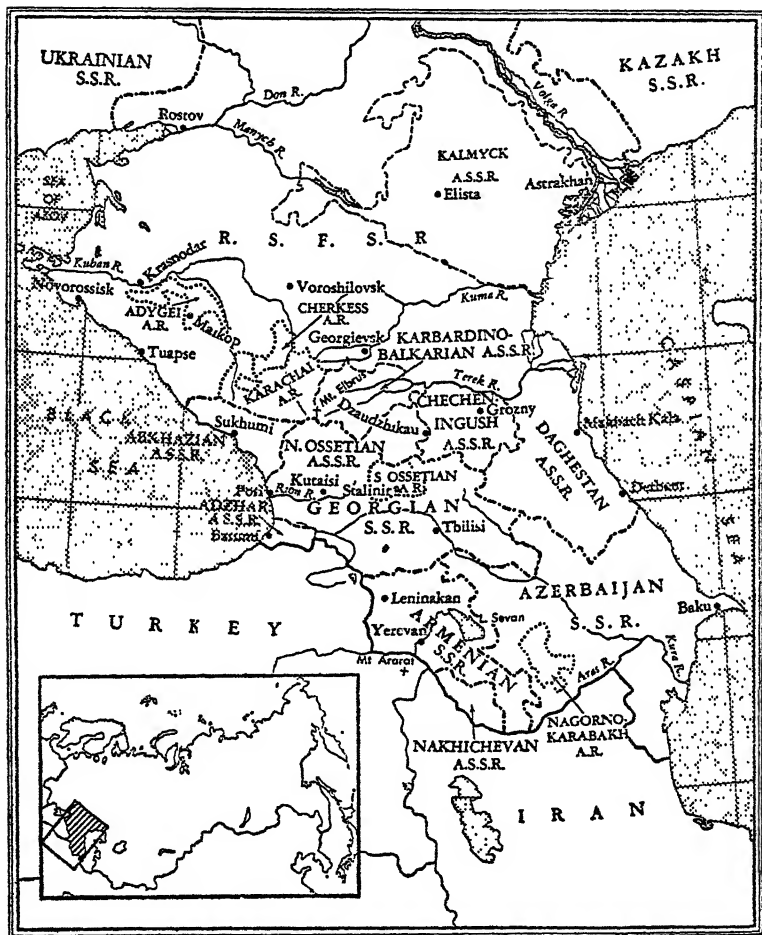
twenty miles of the Turkish border, is the best known and most important port on the east coast of the Black Sea. Through it flow two-thirds of the Soviet Union's oil exports, brought from Baku on the Caspian Sea by railroad and pipe line.

I well remember spending a day at Batumi and going for a leisurely swim in the marvelously blue Black Sea. The city itself is not attractive, but its surroundings are superb, with green and luxuriant hills rising from the coast and serving as background. Talking with a friendly young Adzharian, I learned something about the fearful feuds among the hill tribes here that continued for some time even after the Soviet regime came into power. He remarked that he himself had first-hand knowledge of one case in which a whole family of twenty-one persons was wiped out in a quarrel over a chicken.

Abkhazia, further north, produces the finest tobacco in the U.S.S.R. and also timber of a very high quality. From the remarkably strong Abkhazian chestnut tree came the great beams for Rheims Cathedral in France. The warm and lovely climate of this Republic, resembling that of Florida or California, has led to the establishment of many health resorts in the vicinity. Here, too, nature has conspired to generate human beings of such extraordinary longevity that Soviet scientists concentrating on the problems of old age have sent two expeditions to study Abkhazian centenarians such as Nicholas Shapkovsky, 140 years old, and Shats Chukbar, 139.

It is in the Abkhazian Republic and speaking the Abkhazian tongue that we find several hundred of the Soviet Union's indigenous Negroes, mostly descendants of African slaves procured more than a century ago by native Turkish landowners of the day. At that time the Black Sea harbor of Sukhumi (formerly *Sukbum*, the Russian name), present capital of Abkhazia, was a noted slave-trading center. (It is to be recalled that Alexander Pushkin was partly African in origin—his grandfather was an Abyssinian brought to Russia by Emperor

Peter the Great.) One Negro village in Abkhazia is organized as a soviet with local self-government. Scattered throughout the



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U.S.S.R. are a few additional Negroes who have drifted in from the United States or elsewhere, some of them being highly trained specialists in cotton-growing.

Not far from Abkhazia, in a lofty granite bowl surrounded by snowy peaks and giant glaciers, are the remote mountain villages and alpine meadows of Svanetia, a picturesque district under the direct authority of the Georgian Republic. Physically walled in from the outside world, the Svans or Svanetians, who number about 15,000, lived for thousands of years in almost complete cultural isolation. Exactly when they settled in their land of lost horizons is not known, but Strabo, Greek geographer who flourished in the first century B.C., specifically mentioned in his writings, "the brave and powerful and ferocious Svans."

The deep valleys and high ridges of this region tended to cut off the different villages and communities of Svanetia from one another, thus encouraging the ancestral custom of blood feuds habitual in the rest of the Caucasus Mountains and so reminiscent of America's own mountaineers in the Blue Ridge of the Appalachians. Mr. W. B. Osgood Field, Jr., who paid a month's visit to Svanetia in 1930, observes that "This custom, as might be expected, has greatly influenced the architecture of the country so that we find each family living in a small fortification consisting of a low windowless stone building adjacent to a square tower of forty to eighty feet in height." ⁷ This striking type of architecture is to some extent suggestive of northern Italy and especially the ancient town of Bologna. Whether this is a mere historical coincidence or whether some common architectural influence was at work in the distant past, no one at the present time apparently knows.

In the past Svanetia was accessible only over high, precipitous passes frequently blocked by snow and ice. The dangerous trails wound along the treacherous edges of chasms hundreds of feet deep, crossing insecure log bridges or depending upon shaky extensions fixed by primitive means to the sheer wall of some breath-taking precipice. In recent years, however, a good automobile road has been constructed and a regular airplane service inaugurated. At first the Soviets ran into plenty of trouble trying to win over the Svanetians, but they finally worked out

an agreement with these mountain tribesmen whereby four teachers, two doctors, two dentists, two trained nurses, and one government advisor should enter the district. Since this modest beginning, socialist civilization has been steadily penetrating into the mountain redoubts of the Svanetians.

Considerably farther to the east and within 100 miles of Tbilisi lives the primitive tribe of Khevsurs, likewise hemmed in by towering mountains. Not more than a few thousand in all, they are reputed to be descended from a wandering band of Crusaders who became stranded in the Caucasus; and until a short time ago they wore medieval helmets, chain armor, and white Frankish crosses. The Khevsurs claim to be Christians, but actually their religion is a unique and weird mixture of Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and pagan rites.

In his book *The Russians*, Albert Rhys Williams tells how he got along so well with the Khevsurs that they decided to induct him into the tribe. "It is a simple rite," said one of the head men, Gorbodully. "I make a slit in your middle finger and in mine. We put the two fingers together, and as the two blood streams are united, you become our blood-brother." Whereupon Gorbodully performed the ceremony with his curved silver dagger and exclaimed: "We are blood-brothers now. We have all things in common. The slightest insult to you, and the Khevsurs will rise up as one man to avenge you. And we will go anywhere in the world to do it."⁸

Tucked away among the mountains and plateaus of the so-called Little Caucasus to the southeast of Georgia is the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, about the size of Belgium and smallest of all the Union Republics. Its population is only about 1,300,000, mainly of Japhetic stock and Armenian nationality; but another million Soviet Armenians live outside this Republic, most of them in neighboring Georgia and Azerbaidzhan. The capital of Armenia is Yerevan, 3,200 feet above sea level and ever under the romantic spell of lofty, snow-clad, many-colored

Mt. Ararat, which is thirty-seven miles away across the Turkish frontier, and is 1,000 feet higher than Mt. Blanc.

This great peak can be seen from almost every section of Armenia and is such an integral part of the Armenian consciousness that a replica of it is the central feature of the national coat of arms. Walter Duranty, former *New York Times* correspondent in Soviet Russia, relates a conversation, perhaps apocryphal, in which the Turkish Ambassador said to Georges Chicherin, Soviet Foreign Commissar at the time: "How strange that your Armenian Republic takes its crest from a mountain outside Armenian territory." To which Mr. Chicherin replied: "I have yet to learn that the Turkish symbol, the crescent moon, has been conquered or colonized by you."⁹

Armenia has a long and turbulent history going back to at least 1500 B.C. when an offshoot of the Hittites inhabited the country. Later these became mixed with Medes, Persians, Greeks, and other ethnic strains to form the basic Armenian type. Xenophon and his Ten Thousand fought their way through Armenia in 401 B.C.; and Alexander the Great of Greece brought it into the mainstream of Western culture when he won this province from the Persian Empire in 331 B.C. Beginning with the first century B.C., the Roman conquerors of conquerors intermittently controlled Armenia through force of arms, though the freedom-loving Armenians, during their periods of greatest strength, were able to maintain an independent kingdom, which at one time stretched all the way from the Black Sea to the Caspian.

In 303 A.D. Armenia passed a momentous milestone when it became the first nation in history to adopt Christianity as its state religion. The Roman Empire itself shortly followed suit, but by the end of this same fourth century A.D. the Armenian Church had declared its complete independence of outside control. And to this day it has remained an autonomous Christian sect with its own peculiarities. For century after century during the Christian era the long-suffering Armenians battled with suc-

cessive waves of invaders, including Arabs, Persians, Kurds, Mongolians, and Turks. The Armenians fought so often and so heroically against heavy odds it is no wonder that one of their most-quoted proverbs is "Every man has in his heart a lion that sleeps."

In 1828 Tsarist Russia conquered most of present-day Armenia from Persia and in 1878 brought more Armenians under its control after defeating Turkey. The majority of the Armenian people, however, remained under Turkish rule and were subject to terrible oppression on racial, religious, and economic grounds, though they fought back bravely against the sultans.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the entire civilized world was shocked when the Turks initiated the policy of settling "the Armenian question" by systematic and cold-blooded massacres. In 1895-96 well over 100,000 Armenians were butchered, but the slaughter reached its peak during the First World War when the Turkish Government grew suspicious of the Armenians. According to Viscount Bryce's Blue Book more than 1,000,000 Armenians lost their lives in the holocausts of 1915-16.

In *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* the novelist Franz Werfel writes the story of the intrepid resistance of a small band of Armenians during this hideous chapter in man's inhumanity to man. In 1920 the Turks again ravaged the Armenians with fire and sword. And during the thirty years from 1890 to 1920 so many Armenians were annihilated or had fled to other countries, chiefly Russia, that at present comparatively few are left in Turkey. Public opinion today has tended to forget this whole episode in modern barbarism—so comparable to Hitler's treatment of the Jews.

Following the 1917 Revolution the Armenian Nationalist Party controlled the country for a while and characteristically advocated "A Greater Armenia from sea to sea," for which this

group pleaded at the Paris Peace Conference. The Armenian problem was at this time much discussed in the American press owing to the proposal that the United States should accept a special mandate for Armenia. By 1920 the Communists gained the upper hand and proclaimed an Armenian Autonomous Republic. In 1921 the Soviet Government yielded to Turkey the Kars and Ardahan districts which had been part of Russian Armenia. The Soviets had been forced to renounce these territories in 1918 under the Brest-Litovsk settlement imposed by imperial Germany. And there can be no doubt that the Armenian Republic and the U.S.S.R. greatly desire to see the return of this Armenian *terra irredenta*, where Armenian refugees scattered throughout the globe since World War I could be repatriated.

A considerable number of Armenians, probably as many as 100,000, have emigrated from Turkey, Greece, and elsewhere in order to take advantage of the ethnic, religious, and other freedoms of the new Armenian homeland within the Soviet Union. Some half-million Armenians remain scattered throughout Asia Minor and Europe. More than 125,000 Armenian-born immigrants live in the United States.

From 1926 to 1939 the population of the Armenian S.S.R. increased more than 45 per cent, a rate higher than that of any other Union Republic. Yerevan itself, now the acknowledged center of Armenian culture, grew from 29,000 inhabitants in 1914 to 150,000 in 1937. This city has been the scene of some of the finest modern architectural developments in the U.S.S.R. Many of the new buildings are constructed out of Armenia's characteristic pink tufa, a rock most pleasing to the eye, that can be sawed into various shapes and is lighter yet stronger than either ordinary stone or brick.

Armenia, like Georgia, was predominantly agrarian prior to World War I, but since then has undergone considerable manufacturing development, with the proportion of industrial output in its economy rising from 21.7 per cent to 71.6 per cent



A KABARDINO-BALKARIAN SHEPHERD IN THE CAUCASUS



BAKU OIL WORKERS



AN ARMENIAN COTTON FIELD

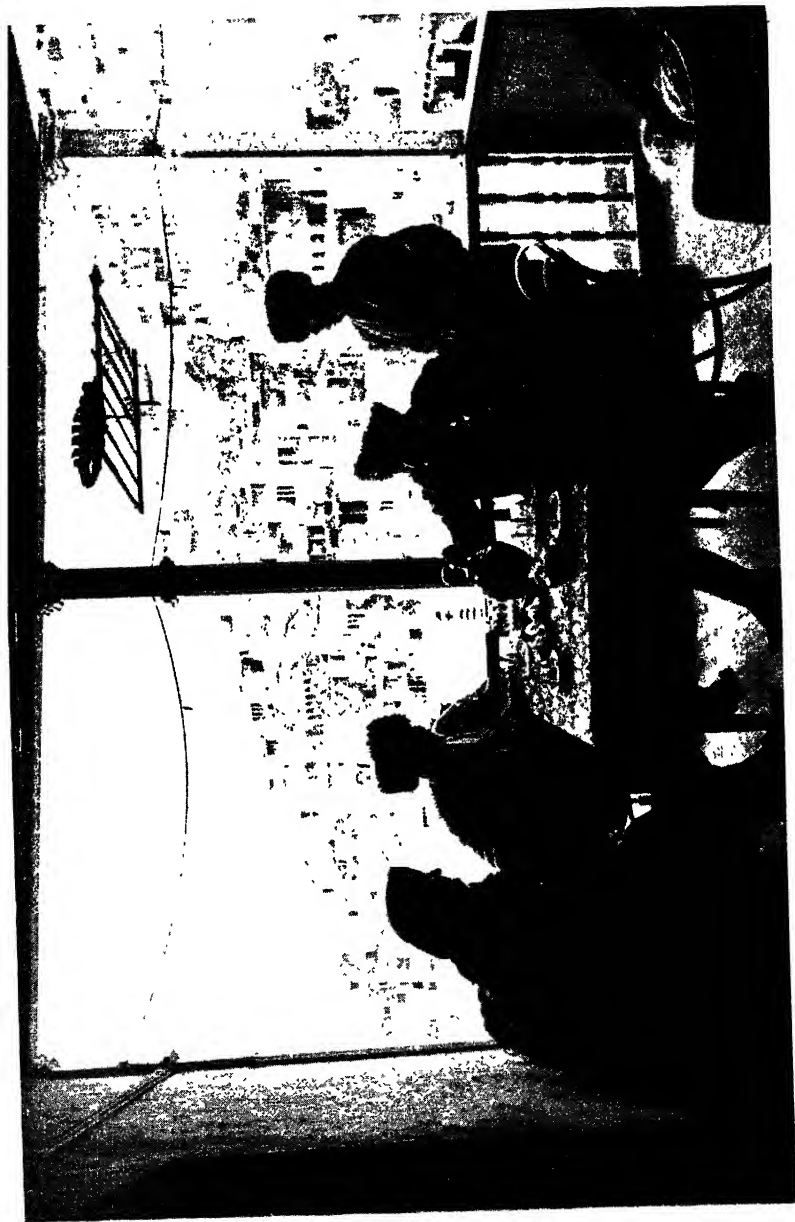


NEGRO
COLLECTIVE
FARMER,
GEORGIAN
S.S.R.

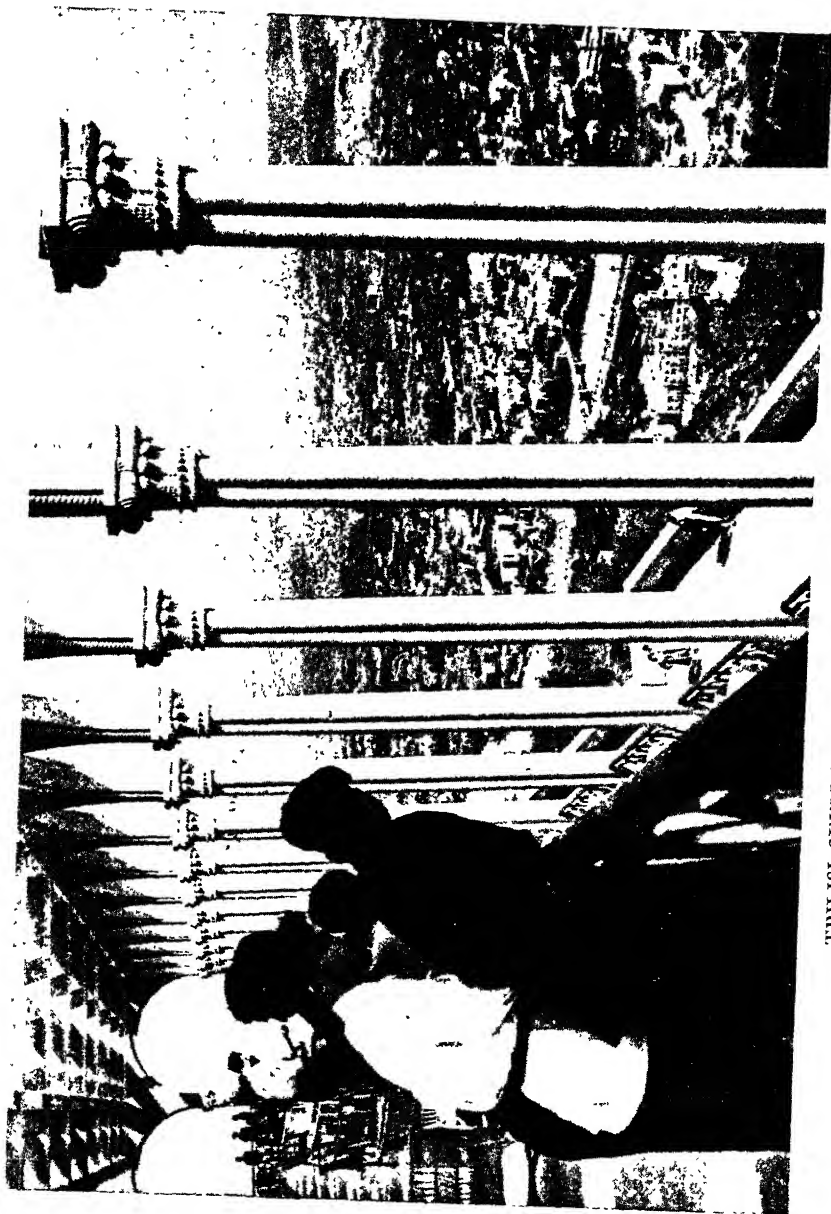


MRS. ALBERT
RHYS WIL-
LIAMS WITH
KHEVSURS IN
NATIVE
COSTUME

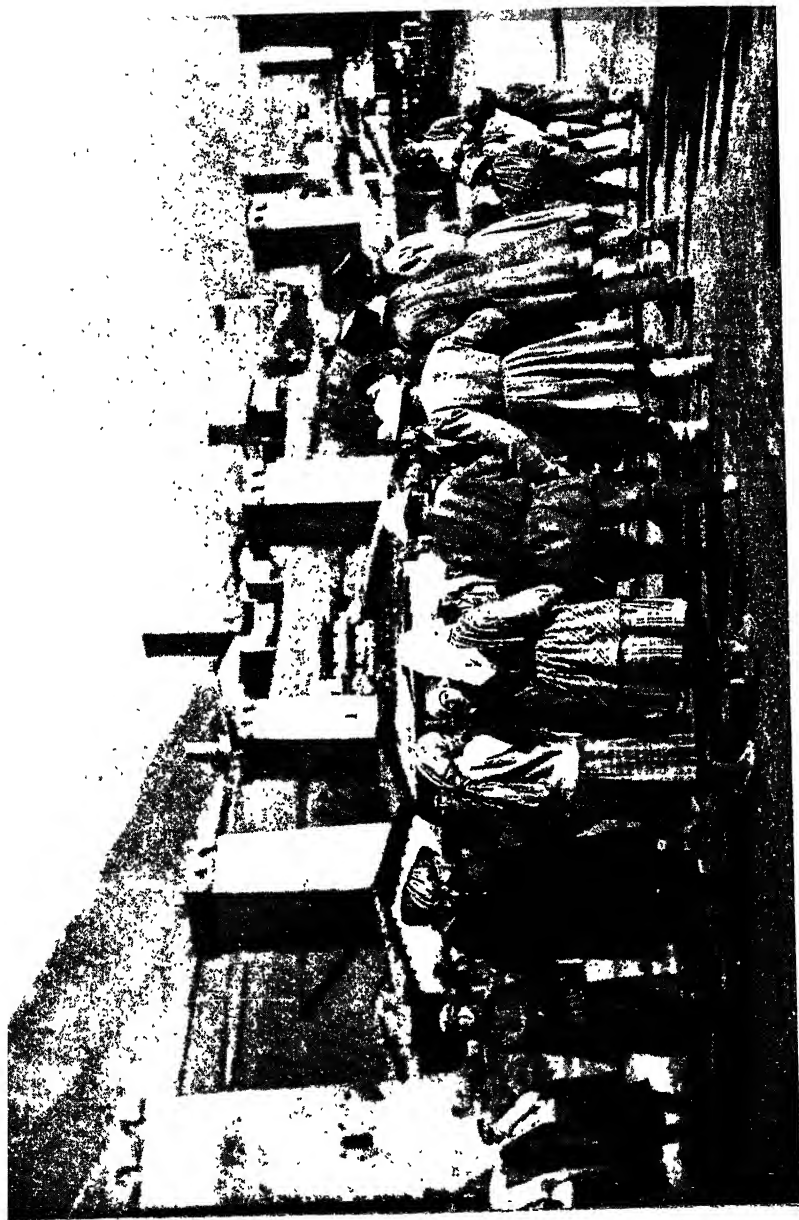
Albert Rhys Williams



A TEA ROOM IN CHOKH, DAGHESTAN



TBILISI SEEN FROM A BALCONY IN STALIN PARK



GROUP DANCING IN SVANETIA



DAGHESTAN—THE SCHOOLMASTER READS THE NEWS



TBILISI—THE SQUARE OF THE HEROES OF THE SOVIET UNION

between 1913 and 1937. Simultaneously its agriculture has become thoroughly modernized, with cotton fields, vineyards, orchards, tobacco plantations and cattle-raising all organized on a collective basis. Agricultural production has been substantially increased by great irrigation projects.

Most impressive of these is the ambitious plan being put into effect to exploit the outflow of Lake Sevan, one of the world's largest and most beautiful high-mountain lakes. On a forbidding volcanic island in its northern corner rises an ancient Armenian monastery erected more than 1,500 years ago. The somewhat unusual idea is to use part of the water of Lake Sevan, which wastes over 300,000 gallons annually by evaporation, to enlarge the volume and electric power production of the Zanga River that rises in the lake. This procedure will reduce the extent of the lake's surface and bring its water volume into closer equilibrium with its evaporation. The swift flow of the Zanga already provides the power for several big hydroelectric plants, one of which is noted for its manufacture of synthetic rubber out of limestone.

An Armenian whose name figured frequently in Soviet war communiqués is General Ivan Bagramian of the Red Army. Another well-known native of Armenia is Karo S. Alabyan, co-architect of the splendid Soviet Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1938-39 and head of the Architects' Commission for the rebuilding of Stalingrad. Among the very front rank of Soviet composers is Aram I. Khachaturyan, an Armenian whose symphonies have been frequently performed abroad. Most prominent of contemporary Armenians is Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, Soviet Commissar of Foreign Trade, a key government department, and a member of the Communist Party's small, inner Political Bureau, the most powerful body in the whole Soviet Union.

The third and largest Transcaucasian Republic is Azerbaidzhan, fabulously rich land of "black gold"—oil of infinite

worth for which Hitler struck in his abortive offensive of 1942 across the steppes of the North Caucasus. Quite properly the official Azerbaidzhan coat of arms includes a mighty oil derrick rising from the earth. The Azerbaidzhan S.S.R., the same size as Maine, is situated at the southwestern end of the Caspian Sea and is bounded on the south by Iran (Persia). The Azerbaidzhanians themselves constitute only 60 per cent of the 3,375,000 population of this Republic, which has sizeable minorities of Great Russians and Armenians.

Most of the Armenians live in their own Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh in the southwestern part of the Republic. Then there is another subdivision, the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, composed of Azerbaidzhanians, on the Iranian border and cut off from Azerbaidzhan proper by a mountainous strip of the Armenian Republic. This is the sole case in which a national division is physically separated from the Union Republic to which it belongs, and is of course due to the special topographical characteristics of the Transcaucasus.

Since the beginning of recorded history Azerbaidzhan has been the crossroads for important trade routes from east, west, north and south. And invaders from all directions of the compass swept over this land at one time or another. Its people, unlike the other inhabitants of the Transcaucasus, are predominantly Turco-Tatar in origin and are closely related to the Central Asiatic ethnic groups across the Caspian and to the natives of a neighboring Iranian province that is itself called Azerbaidzhan. The Soviet Azerbaidzhanians are Moslem in their faith, but there are also traces of very primitive religions in this region. The Azerbaidzhan S.S.R. was traditionally known as the "Land of Fire," presumably because of its easily combustible oil and gas deposits. Up to a hundred years ago fire-worshippers of the cult of Zoroaster carried on their rites before the flames of the sacred temple, Surakhani, still standing today near Baku.

This internationally famous port on the Apsheron Peninsula

is the capital of the Azerbaidzhan Republic and one of the greatest centers for oil production on the face of the globe. It has a population of nearly 900,000 and is one of the five or six largest cities in the U.S.S.R. A long-sought prize on the part of foreign imperialists, Baku was occupied for a short time in 1918 by the British, who carried through the notorious execution of the twenty-six Bolshevik commissars who had been running the city.

Up until a few years ago, 70 per cent of the Soviet Union's oil was pumped out of the hot, arid, semidesert tracts in the vicinity of Baku. But the discovery and exploitation of new oil fields elsewhere, giving the U.S.S.R. first place among all countries in the magnitude of its petroleum reserves, has decreased this proportion. While a good deal of Baku's unceasing flow of oil is taken by rail directly north, most of it either goes by pipe line to Batumi or is carried by ship 520 miles up the Caspian Sea to Astrakhan, the Russian Republic's busy port at the mouth of the Volga, and thence redistributed throughout the nation.

Baku was also a strategic center in the transportation of Lend-Lease material to the Soviet fighting fronts. Much of this material came over the Trans-Iranian railway, finally completed in 1938, from Khorramshahr at the innermost point of the Persian Gulf to various harbors along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. Thence it was carried by boat or barge to Baku, Astrakhan, or other Caspian harbors for trans-shipment north.

The salty Caspian, biggest landlocked body of water on earth, is not only a vital communications route, but also a tremendous reservoir for many kinds of fish. And from the sturgeon caught by the Azerbaidzhanians is obtained the major part of the luscious black caviar exported all over the world from the U.S.S.R. Large-scale irrigation has immensely increased the agricultural wealth of the Azerbaidzhan Republic and has turned its southern lowlands, blessed with a climate like Egypt's, into one of the most productive cotton-growing regions in the Soviet

Union. Striking progress has also been made in the cultivation of the silkworm and of rice, and in the raising of cattle.

The Jewish Minority

Before proceeding to Soviet Asia we have one additional important minority to consider, which has no special territory of its own in Soviet Europe but which is concentrated in that area of the U.S.S.R. These are the Jews. Of all the ethnic groups in the Empire of the Tsars and the land of the Soviets, none except the Armenians has suffered such wrongs and endured such persecution as the Jews. In old Russia there were about 5,000,000 Jews, largely urbanized and the bulk of them living in the Ukraine, Byelo-Russia, and the major part of Poland under Russian dominion. The vast majority of Jews in Russian territory came under Tsarist sovereignty when Russia acquired large segments of Poland in the three partitions of that unhappy country in the late eighteenth century; and in a fourth partition, of the remainder, in 1815. Later considerable numbers of Polish Jews moved eastward into Byelo-Russia and the Ukraine.

In the Crimea there were perhaps 20,000 Jews who claimed that their ancestors had inhabited the region before the crucifixion of Jesus. Then in the Caucasus and Transcaucasus there were about 50,000 Mountain Jews, some of whom asserted that they were descended from the famous ten lost tribes of Israel. The same claim was made by some 20,000 Jews in and near the Central Asian metropolis of Bukhara, now one of the chief cities of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic.

When, after the First World War, the Soviet Union lost all the western border provinces that had belonged to the Tsars, it simultaneously lost more than a third of its Jewish population. The census of 1939 listed 3,020,141 Jews in the U.S.S.R., establishing them as the seventh most numerous national group. With the recovery of the Baltic states, eastern Poland, and Besarabia, the Soviet Union regained about 2,200,000 Jews (ex-

clusive of non-Soviet refugees). Allowing for a slight natural increase among these two main sections of the Jewish population, we find that the grand total of Soviet Jews at the time of Hitler's attack in 1941 was about 5,300,000.

Since the 1917 Revolution Jews have been free to reside in one part or another of the Soviet Union on the same basis as anyone else. Under the Tsars, however, all the Jews in the Empire, except the small groups in the south that I mentioned above, were compelled to live in the so-called Pale of Settlement in the western portions of European Russia. This large-scale semi-ghetto was first set up in 1791. In prerevolutionary days, therefore, the Jews were barred, with rare exceptions, from the main cities and districts of what is now the Russian Federated Republic.

The Tsarist Government also excluded Jews from all public administrative posts and from most of the professions. There were far-reaching restrictions on their attending educational institutions and engaging in agriculture. The law in general forbade them to own land. K. B. Pobedonostsev, cabinet minister under Nicholas II, in charge of religious affairs, well expressed church-state policy when he advocated solution of the Jewish problem by converting one-third of the Jews to Christianity, driving one-third into emigration, and killing off the remaining one-third through starvation.

Residential, educational and other discriminations against the Jews in imperial Russia were all mild forms of persecution as compared with the organized raids and massacres in which thousands upon thousands of Jews—men, women and children—were brutally slain and their homes plundered. These horrible slaughters of the innocent (previews of what the more efficient Nazis would later do) were called *pogroms* in Russian. And this word of awful import, a symbolic gift from Tsarist Russia to the world's vocabulary, was taken over intact into English and other languages.

The most disgraceful aspect of the pogroms was that they

were actually promoted and protected by both the fiercely reactionary Government, with its semiofficial "Black Hundred" societies, and the state-controlled Orthodox Church. From as early as the seventeenth century the Cossacks in the Ukraine were in the habit of killing off Jews wholesale whenever it suited their fancy. But the big, state-engineered pogroms took place in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. There were a whole series of them in 1881 and 1882 during the reign of Tsar Alexander III. The authorities mistakenly believed that the Jews were the prime factor in the revolutionary movement and also roused popular feeling against them by playing up the familiar charges of so-called ritual murder.

Plehve, Minister of the Interior under Nicholas II, organized an appalling series of pogroms in 1903 beginning with Kishinev in Bessarabia. Even worse pogroms came in 1905 during and after the abortive revolution against the Tsarist regime in that year and took in such cities as Kiev, Odessa, Tomsk, and Byalostok. It is estimated that more than 100 pogroms occurred during this period and that they resulted in the killing of 4,000 Jews, the wounding of 10,000, and the burning or destruction of innumerable houses and other buildings. Leaflets instigating some of the massacres were definitely traced to police headquarters in St. Petersburg. During the First World War many more pogroms took place, often arising from trumped-up charges that the Jews were guilty of espionage. These dreadful slaughters of the Jews continued well into the Civil War years when the White, counterrevolutionary generals, especially Denikin in the Ukraine, constantly utilized pogroms as an anti-Soviet device to split the opposing population and get rid of possible Bolsheviks. In these ferocious pogroms of the White armies, more horrible even than those carried out under the Tsars, at least 100,000 Jews perished.

The official anti-Semitism of the Tsarist regime included the refusal of passports to American Jewish citizens who wished

to travel in Russia or do business there. These restrictions, as well as the bloody pogroms and other harsh measures against the Jews in Russia, aroused intense indignation in the United States. The crisis mounted with fiery speeches in Congress and fierce denunciations in the American press. It was hotly argued that Russia's barring of American Jews was a violation of the Commercial Treaty of 1832 between the two countries. And in December, 1911, the House of Representatives passed, 301 to 1, a resolution calling for the abrogation of the treaty on the ground that the Tsarist Government had violated it by clear discrimination against one category of American citizens. When the United States Senate was about to pass a similar resolution, the American State Department itself hurriedly terminated the treaty as of January 1, 1913. It is indeed significant that during more than 100 years of diplomatic relations between the United States and Russia the most serious crisis should have arisen over democratic America's insistence on fair treatment of the Jews.

In addition to all their other troubles, the Jews of Tsarist and Soviet Russia were fated, because of their concentration along the western reaches of the country, to be in the direct path of the German invaders during the First and Second World Wars. In the First World War this meant heavy losses of property and life among the civilian Jewish population, though the Kaiser's armies did not persecute the Jews as such. In the Second World War the ordeal of the Jews was far more terrible, both because the German invasion penetrated much deeper into the hinterland and because it was part of the unspeakable Nazi policy to enslave, torture, and murder the Jews of the U.S.S.R. as well as those of other nations. Nobody at present knows how many Jews succumbed to the Hitlerite terror in the Soviet Republics of the Ukraine, Moldavia, Byelo-Russia, and the Baltic. More than 1,000,000, however, were safely evacuated from these regions and were given priority in transportation and care, the bulk of them going to Uzbekistan.

Following the Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Government at

once abolished all the old Tsarist discriminations against the Jews and welcomed them into the Soviet family of peoples on a free and equal basis. This did not, however, immediately put an end to the special difficulties of the Jews. In the first place, anti-Semitic prejudice among the different nationalities of the U.S.S.R. was too deeply rooted to be eliminated merely by an official decree. In the second place, as the socialist economic principles of the new regime were progressively put into effect and more and more business became owned and operated by the Government, the Jews were particularly hard hit, due to the fact that so high a proportion of them earned their livings as small-scale businessmen and shopkeepers. As late as 1924 three-fourths of the gainfully employed Soviet Jews were traders or small producers. In its socialization program the Soviet authorities of course discriminated against Jews as capitalists, but never as Jews.

The Five-Year Plans starting in 1928 gave employment to many Jews who were forced out of private trade. In addition the Government made vigorous—and successful—efforts to transfer large numbers of Jews to agriculture, in which only 2.4 per cent of them were engaged, according to the Tsarist census of 1897. An official committee known as *Komzet* proceeded to function under the Soviet of Nationalities and an auxiliary Society for the Settlement of Toiling Jews on the Land was organized. It was called *Ozet*. Scores of thousands of Jewish farm colonists set up their own farming communities, later developing into collectives, in various parts of the U.S.S.R., especially in the southeastern Ukraine and the northern half of the Crimean Peninsula. By 1939 the percentage of Soviet Jews in agriculture had risen to 5.8. The widely held theory, prevalent even among Jews themselves, that Jews are unsuited to agricultural pursuits has gone by the boards in the Soviet Union.

Foreign Jews rendered invaluable aid in the spread of Jewish agricultural settlements in the U.S.S.R. and in the United States in 1924 established the American Jewish Joint Agricultural

Corporation, *Agro-Joint*, which was later replaced by the American Society for Jewish Farm Settlements in Russia. These two organizations raised more than \$15,000,000 as loans or contributions to further Jewish farming activities in the Soviet Union.

Fully equal in importance to the Soviet Government's stimulus of Jewish farming was its creation, in 1928, of a special district in the Far East where Jews from all over the Soviet Union and the world at large could go and settle if they so desired. This region is situated along the Manchurian frontier and centers upon the Amur River and two of its tributaries, the Bira and the Bidzhan. Hence the territory is usually known as Birobidzhan, though since 1934 its official name has been the Jewish Autonomous Region. The capital of the Region is the city of Birobidzhan on the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

About one and a half times bigger than Palestine, the Jewish A.R. is rich in fertile agricultural land, succulent grasses for pasture, fur-bearing animals, forests, and mineral resources. But because it was located in a relatively undeveloped part of the Russian Federated Republic, was difficult to get to and initially presented the typical hardships of pioneer life, its population did not increase with rapidity. Furthermore, most of the Soviet Jews, enjoying under the Soviet regime complete ethnic freedom for the first time, felt no need to live apart in a special Jewish Region. For these various reasons, though the Region could maintain 4,000,000 people if sufficiently developed economically, its population in 1941 was only about 114,000. An estimated 40 per cent of these were Jews and the remainder Russians, Koreans, and other Soviet nationalities. However, since the Nazi invasion as many as 100,000 refugee Jews, including thousands of war orphans, may have gone to Birobidzhan.

During the past decade the Jewish Autonomous Region has made great strides ahead in the growth of light industry, collective farms, cattle-breeding, and fishing. The Region is noted for its honey-producing flowers and beehives. Some of its fine

marble was shipped all the way to Moscow for use in the construction of the Moscow subway. Besides the Trans-Siberian Railroad, which spans the northern part of the Region for 200 miles, the Amur, Bira, and Bidzhan Rivers provide the chief means of transportation in this territory. Recently road-building, stimulated by the needs of defense against the Japanese, has been making considerable progress over terrain much of which is virgin wilderness. The Region's capital, Birobidzhan, formerly a small railway station, has become, through careful planning, a beautiful and spacious modern city that serves as both an industrial and a cultural center.

The Jewish A.R., like the other Autonomous Regions in the Soviet Union, enjoys self-government in regard to purely local affairs and elects five deputies to the Soviet of Nationalities. One of the present deputies from this area is a young Jewish woman. The official language of the territory is Yiddish. Hence governmental business and court proceedings are conducted in Yiddish, which is also the predominant language in the schools, colleges, and general cultural life of the Region. There is a daily newspaper in Yiddish and a Jewish Art Theater of high quality.

In addition to the Jewish Autonomous Region there are a number of much smaller national regions and communities in Soviet Europe where the Jews form a substantial majority and have established their own regional, city, or village soviets. These Jewish Soviets also have the privilege of local self-government and cultural autonomy, including the use of Yiddish as the official language in government, courts, and schools. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Jews, since 1917, have moved to localities where they remain a distinct minority. And in 1941 "almost 40 per cent of the Jewish population of the U.S.S.R. resided in areas once forbidden them by the Tsars."

Since much of the prerevolutionary anti-Semitism in the Russian Empire was based on religious grounds and since the official state Church aimed to stamp out the Jewish religion, it is

significant to note that *all* religions in the Soviet Union today are legally on an equal footing. The Hebrew religion, Judaism, like the other faiths in the U.S.S.R., enjoys freedom of worship. But neither Judaism nor its official language, Hebrew, is encouraged by the Soviet Government. And organized religious teaching is in general not permitted to students under eighteen years of age. The Soviets have also been opposed to Zionism as a bourgeois movement bound up with foreign imperialism.

Under the Soviet regime the Jews have made marked cultural advances. Always a comparatively well-educated group, their literacy was as high as 90 per cent in 1930 and practically 100 per cent in 1939. The 2,000,000 and more Jews who came under Soviet sovereignty in 1939 and 1940 pulled down the general average of literacy somewhat. In 1938 there were published in the Soviet Union five Yiddish magazines, fourteen Yiddish newspapers, and 372 books in Yiddish. The State Jewish Theater in Moscow is one of the best in the U.S.S.R. and on January 1, 1946, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. More than ten other Jewish theaters exist in the U.S.S.R., including a special one for children. During the war the Soviet Jews made a splendid record for themselves in industry, in agriculture, and in the armed forces. They ranked fourth among the national groups receiving military decorations.

Undoubtedly the Soviet Jew best known abroad is Maxim M. Litvinov, able Commissar for Foreign Affairs from 1930 to 1939 and Ambassador to the United States from 1941 to 1943. Mr. Litvinov was the outstanding spokesman for the Soviet Union's policy of halting Fascist and Nazi aggression through co-operation with the Western democracies in a functioning system of collective security. He is now a Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs. Probably better known than Litvinov among the people of the Soviet Union is Lazar M. Kaganovich, hard-driving organizer of Soviet transportation, a Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and a member of the Polit-

bureau. His wife, also Jewish, is Chairman of the textile workers' trade union. Other prominent Soviet Jews are Lieutenant General Jacob Kreiser, the eloquent writer, Ilya Ehrenburg, and the great actor, Solomon Mikhoels, who in 1943 led a delegation to the United States in order to further co-operation between American and Soviet Jewry.

Noted American Jews who were born in Tsarist Russia are Morris Cohen, the philosopher; Irving Berlin, the composer; David Sarnoff, the radio magnate; Maurice Hindus and Max Lerner, writers. These men were part of the huge Jewish emigration to the United States from imperial Russia, with all its oppression and misery. Between the years 1881 and 1910 no less than 1,119,059 Jews entered democratic America from autocratic Russia.

Summing up the position of the Jews in the Soviet Union, we can state that in this country for the first time in the history of eastern Europe a large minority of Jews, several millions in number, possesses full and equal rights with all other citizens of the land in which they are living. These rights extend to every aspect of Soviet life. Though a good deal of lingering anti-Semitism remained in the U.S.S.R. up through the end of the period of the New Economic Policy in 1928, it has since become almost nonexistent. And the Soviet Jews who are old enough to know what existence was like under the Tsars realize better than anyone else the freedom, the self-respect, and the security that the Soviet minorities policy has brought them.

Among other things, the Soviet Jews are free, if they so wish, to give up the characteristically Jewish religion and culture that have come down to them over the centuries, to intermarry and assimilate with other peoples and lose entirely their Jewish self-identity. In fact, it would seem that this actually has been the tendency in the U.S.S.R. Mr. William Henry Chamberlin, one of the Soviet regime's severest critics, says this about the matter:

"The Soviet Union has come closer than any other large power to solving what is sometimes called the Jewish problem on a basis of assimilation. Completely new living conditions have helped to do away with old religious and social barriers. The sense of Jewish racial consciousness, stimulated by persecution and discrimination, is reduced to a minimum under a regime of racial equality and tolerance. The free granting of cultural autonomy sometimes paralyzes the demand for it. Many Jewish parents do not wish to have their children taught Yiddish in the schools and prefer to have them instructed in Russian. . . . Among the younger Jews observance of old Hebrew festivals and ritual has almost died out. Inter-marriage with Russians has become frequent." ¹⁰

But if assimilation of the Jews is to be the eventual outcome in the Soviet Union, the very size of the Jewish minority makes certain that this outcome will take a long time. And for the rest of the twentieth century at least, there will undoubtedly be Jewish groups in the U.S.S.R. who maintain their distinctive cultural institutions based on the Yiddish language. Moreover, the Nazi-Soviet war and Hitler's mass murder of millions of Jews throughout Europe, including its Soviet section, brought a recrudescence of Jewish consciousness in the U.S.S.R. As Ilya Ehrenburg expresses it: "I grew up in Moscow. My native tongue is Russian. I do not know the Yiddish language. I am a Russian, a Soviet citizen, a man who cherishes the culture of Europe. But now I feel bound to the Jews because of the great misery of my Jewish people." ¹¹

This Jewish consciousness was further stimulated by the Nazis' ferocious anti-Semitic propaganda among the people of the German-occupied areas in Soviet Europe. When the Soviet authorities regained control of these territories they undertook with success vigorous measures to offset this propaganda, which had given rise to sporadic anti-Jewish prejudice.

Meanwhile, with anti-Semitism outlawed by both the Soviet

Constitution and public opinion, and cultural autonomy guaranteed where there are Jewish majorities who want it, the Jews in the Soviet Union enjoy a fully rounded ethnic democracy that no other country in the world at present gives to the Jewish people.

CHAPTER IV

THE PEOPLES OF SOVIET ASIA

Central Asia—New El Dorado

THE ASIATIC part of the Soviet Union covers an immense area comprising seven-eighths of the entire U.S.S.R. and taking in all the territory east of the Ural Mountains, the Ural River, and the Caspian Sea. The division of Soviet Russia into Asiatic and European sections does not have much geographical, political, or ethnic significance. And current maps fail to follow precisely the traditional dividing line along the crest of the Urals, since Asia is usually made to extend a bit west of this natural boundary in the vicinity of the city of Molotov. Soviet Asia north and east of the Kazakh S.S.R. is customarily known as Siberia. The Kazakh Republic itself and the country south of it are what we call Soviet Central Asia.

This tremendous tract of territory lies directly across the Caspian from the Caucasus and Transcaucasus. In the north it touches the Trans-Siberian Railroad at one point, while in the south its mountainous boundaries adjoin Iran, Afghanistan, and the Chinese province of Sinkiang. Most of this vast region was conquered and annexed by the Russian Empire in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and was administered by the Tsars under the name of Turkestan. Under the Soviets, who gained control in 1921, the backward native peoples made rapid development economically, culturally, and politically. Five Union Republics ultimately emerged: Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Kirgizia, and Kazakhstan. The suffix "stan" means

"camp." Thus, Uzbekistan is literally "camp of the Uzbeks," Kazakhstan "camp of the Kazakhs," and so on.

Soviet Central Asia, historically one of the most interesting and romantic parts of the U.S.S.R., is full of the dead remains and living symbols of bygone ages. Here rose the rich and famous cities of Holy Bukhara and Golden Samarkand, with their many mosques, minarets, and other structures combining to create an architectural splendor unsurpassed in the Moslem world. Here met and merged the trade, the art, the civilizations of the ancient and medieval East, with Persian, Turkish, Indian, and Chinese influences all playing a role.

In 328 B.C. Alexander the Great made a spectacular march into this land from the west and established Greek dominion. A thousand years later the Arabs sacked Samarkand and set up a Mohammedan state. In the eleventh century came the Seljuk Turks as conquerors. Then in 1221 Mongol horsemen from the East overran and ravaged the country under the stormy leadership of Genghis Khan, he who said that "as there is one ruler in heaven, so there should be but one on earth." He was followed in the fourteenth century by another great conqueror, "the Earth-Shaker," Tamerlane, and his oriental hordes. Tamerlane founded an empire in which Samarkand was his headquarters, his luxurious residence, and his last resting place. And he enriched the city beyond the dreams of avarice with booty from many a distant campaign, pushing his conquests as far north and west as the banks of the Volga River.

But Tamerlane's realm did not last long after his own reign and the Samarkand district soon suffered the consequences of political and economic decay. Various Moslem khans and emirs divided Central Asia among themselves and proceeded intermittently to fight and intrigue against one another, while unceasingly oppressing the people. Finally Tsarist Russia moved in and by 1895 had succeeded in subjugating all of Turkestan.

Tsarist control, however, remained somewhat tenuous, and during the First World War a serious revolt against Nicholas

It took place throughout this region. It came as the result of a decree in June, 1916, conscripting a large number of Turkestan workers for labor in connection with the conflict against the Central Powers. The rebellion lasted from July until November, and millions of the native inhabitants participated in it to a greater or lesser degree. During and after the uprising at least 300,000 people fled from the Tsarist terror into neighboring countries, chiefly China. This revolt constituted the war's first serious rupture within the loosely conjoined Russian Empire and pointed the way for the later independence movements among the minority peoples.

After the fall of the Russian monarchy and the break-up of the Empire, it took a number of years before the Soviets could establish full authority in Central Asia. The native emirs, especially of Bukhara and Khiva, put up strong resistance and the whole land became immersed in bloodshed and violence. Even after the indigenous populations had set up Soviet regimes, counterrevolutionary bands known as the Basmachi continued to hold important territory until 1922. In 1921 and 1922 the Turkish adventurer, Enver Pasha, gave considerable impetus to the anti-Soviet movement by uniting it briefly under the program of erecting a great Pan-Islamic Empire in Central Asia. The Basmachi were finally driven over the southern borders into Afghanistan, but carried on terroristic operations from there as late as 1931.

Approximately 17,500,000 people lived in Soviet Central Asia in 1941, the overwhelming majority of them being Turco-Tatar in origin. The 1941 population became temporarily swelled owing to the fact that the Soviet authorities transferred more than 3,000,000 refugees from the invaded districts in the west to Siberia and Central Asia. A substantial number of these evacuees are remaining permanently in their new homes. Except for the Slavs among them, the peoples of the Central Asiatic region are dark-skinned or yellow-skinned, all oriental in appearance. Predominantly nomadic for centuries past, they came

to regard their wandering way of life almost as a law of nature. As a Kirgiz woman put it: "People *must* move about, for don't you see, the moon and the stars, water, animals, birds and fishes all move, and only the dead and the earth lie still."

The total area of the five Union Republics in this huge Soviet domain is about seven times that of France and almost precisely half the United States. Unfortunately, however, the hot, arid climate that prevails in Central Asia and the rocky, precipitous terrain in the southeastern sections have brought a large proportion of the land under the sway of soil-destroying forces from desert and mountain. As authors R. A. Davies and A. J. Steiger tell us in their fact-filled *Soviet Asia*, the history of this region "is one of an age-old struggle to extort arable land from the mountains and from the desert. In the highlands, the farms, handed on for generations from father to son, have been 'handmade,' with soil carried uphill by the basketful on the backs of donkeys, men and women. Only too often the thin precious dirt has later been washed away by a cloudburst. On the plain, the struggle for survival has centered in the attempt to utilize, to the last drop, the waters plunging down the mountainsides."¹

It is easy to understand why, since earliest times, the prosperity of Central Asia has depended primarily upon the proper utilization of water and the efficient maintenance of the irrigation system. During periods of war or social decay the canals have tended to fall into decline; and then the economy has languished and the people have starved. During the pre-Soviet era control of the water supply, the irrigation network, and the arable land was mainly in the hands of the Central Asiatic rulers and local feudal chiefs, or *bey*s.

The Emir of Bukhara, for instance, held as his personal property 55.8 per cent of the arable land. The thoroughly exploited peasants throughout old Turkestan were subject to all kinds of overburdening taxes and feudal dues. They had to deliver up as much as a quarter of their crops and then also pay special

taxes to the emirs' local agents, to the official who collected their grain, to the officer in charge of water distribution, to the village overseer. Further taxes were imposed for cattle, fodder, and grazing privileges. And of course there were the regular tithes for the *mullahs* (Moslem priests) and the upkeep of the mosques. Naturally the Soviet regime has put an end to all this and has instituted public ownership or control in all key economic affairs.

In addition, the Soviets, with their tireless energy and scientific techniques, have made enormous strides in the battle to extend fertility in one of the world's worst dust bowls. Refusing to accept defeat at the hands of nature or to acknowledge as permanent the fresh inroads of the sands during the modern era, they are employing every possible device, including the reconstruction of irrigation canals thousands of years old, to enlarge the oases and push back the desert. To hold and stabilize their gains, the desert fighters of central Asia are successfully utilizing belts of drought-resistant trees to screen the crops in new-won fields against the ravages of the wind-blown sand. Actually, scientific agriculture, at least in the Soviet Union, can see little limit in the reclamation of desert wastes, provided that sufficient water and sufficient labor are available.

Central Asia was primarily a cotton colony under the Tsars. And though today this region boasts of a very wide variety of agricultural and industrial products, cotton still is king on its rolling steppes and flatlands, particularly in the southeastern section. Here is the Soviet Union's great cotton belt, comparable to America's Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi. Production of the "white gold" has of course been tremendously increased by the new system of collective farming and up-to-date machinery. The Soviets use their own designs of automatic cotton picker, patterned after the machine invented by the Rust brothers in the United States.

The Soviet regime in the Central Asiatic Republics has faced not only the usual problems of transforming a backward, illiter-

ate population into an educated one able to understand and handle the advanced techniques of a socialized industry and agriculture. It has also been compelled to meet and overcome the old-time prejudices of the Mohammedan religion, which were a serious obstacle in practically every field of economic and cultural activity. For instance, the struggle to free the women of Central Asia from such deeply rooted customs as the harem and the wearing of the veil constitutes a thrilling saga in itself. And I shall have more to say about it in a later chapter.

In no part of the Soviet Union is the contrast and combination of old and new more marked than throughout Central Asia. For this entire region has leaped, in but a moment of history, from a stagnant, retrogressive semifeudalism, characterized by Asiatic tyranny of the most barbarous type, to a progressive, modern, dynamic stage of society in the form of Marxist socialism. This revolutionary advance is apparent wherever one goes in Central Asia, whether in the city districts where the old towns and the new stand side by side, whether in the rural areas where natives in their traditional garb operate tractors and combines, or in the remote valleys of the high southern ranges where isolated peoples have for the first time been brought into close touch with twentieth-century civilization.

The Turkmen and Uzbek Republics

It takes a day or a night by steamer sailing due east across the Caspian from Baku to get to Krasnovodsk, chief port of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic. Turkmenia, with a population of over 1,300,000, contains the Soviet Union's southernmost territory, having a common frontier with Iran for 600 miles and with Afghanistan for 400. It is slightly bigger than pre-Hitler Germany. The tall, dark, bearded Turkmenians of this hot and sun-baked land put up stiff and stubborn resistance against the conquering Russians back in the 1870's and 1880's,

striking suddenly in hard-riding guerrilla bands, poisoning the wells, and holding Russian prisoners for ransom.

One Tsarist general in Transcaspia, evidently much annoyed at the natives' disregard of the ordinary rules of warfare, issued the following order: "Mercilessly destroy all that come in your way and impose a heavy tribute in money and horses on the rest. . . . The Turcomans are a dark spot on the earth. It is a disgrace that humanity tolerates them."² Earlier the Turkmenians had proved a tough problem for various Moslem emirs, as indicated in the legendary exploits of the quick-witted, fast-moving Aldar Kose, a picaresque Turkmenian Robin Hood.

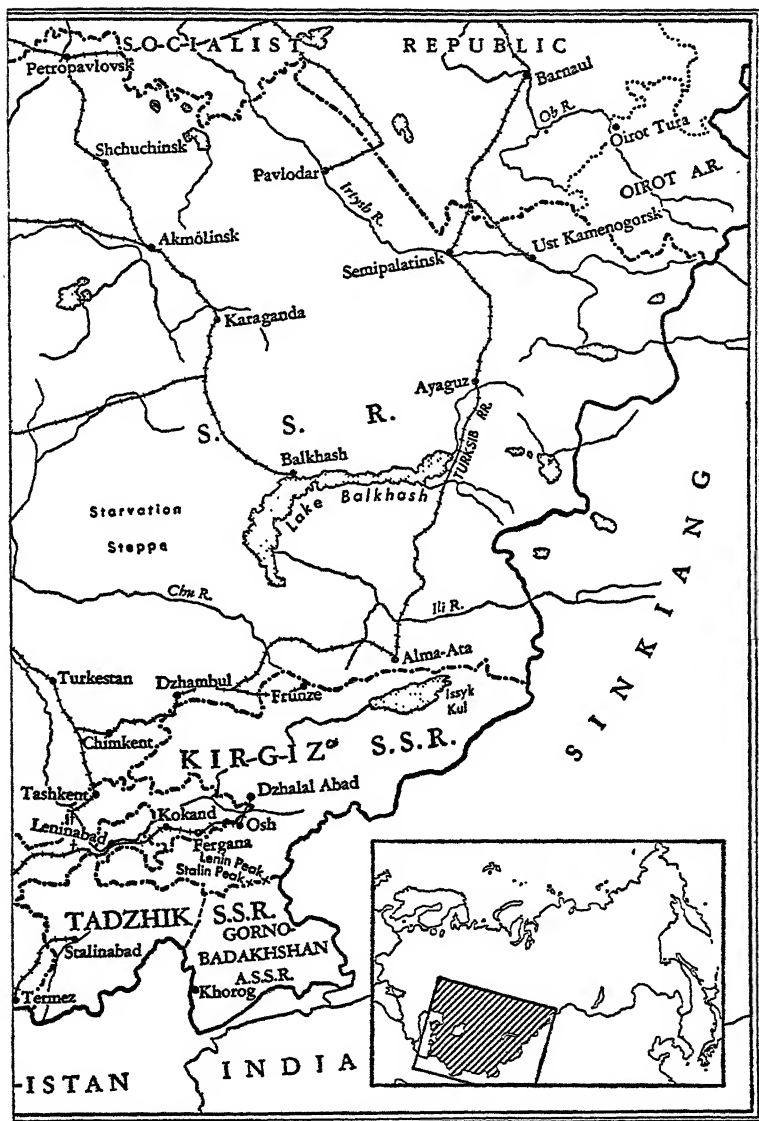
Before the coming of the Soviets there was no united Turkmenian nation and no generally accepted Turkmenian language. Under the Tsars this people was divided into separate tribes and clans that spoke different dialects and waged sanguinary warfare with one another, if they came into mutual contact at all. Some years after the 1917 Revolution Soviet explorers found in the great Desert of Kara-Kum, meaning "Black Sands," a considerable number of nomad enclaves whose inhabitants, well over 10,000 in all, had never heard of either the Tsarist or Soviet Governments and so did not have the slightest realization that they had been "annexed."

The heads of the Turkmenian clans tended to function as feudal lords who maintained a monopoly over the arable land and the irrigation system. After the Russian conquest the masses of the Turkmenian people suffered under the double oppression of their own patriarchal, feudal elements and the Tsarist Government. Soviet policy rapidly changed all this, freed the Turkmenians from economic exploitation and welded them for the first time into a united, self-conscious nation.

Unhappily, the boundless sands of Kara-Kum, rippled and constantly shifting like the sea, constitute 80 per cent of the Turkmenian Republic. In cities like Krasnovodsk, on the edge of the desert flats and far away from the mountains to the south, no fresh water is obtainable; and therefore all water



SOVIET CEN



TRAL ASIA

used for drinking or cooking has to be brought from other places or distilled from the salty Caspian Sea. To make a bad situation worse, the Caspian itself, already 84 feet below sea level, is gradually drying up and leaving desolate clay wastes as it recedes. It is no wonder that in Turkmenia the struggle for water has been the principal theme of folk art and legend.

The enterprising Turkmenians, however, are making mighty efforts to reclaim the desert and have made impressive progress. Millions of rubles have been spent on extending the irrigation system and on setting up experimental stations in various parts of the country. Artificial rain has been produced here by sprinkling chemicals on passing clouds from airplanes. And it has been discovered that the desert itself is by no means as inhospitable to life as once thought. Large areas of it are covered by a sparse grass upon which sheep and camels can graze. Equally important, much of the desert soil maintains moisture a few feet below the surface, so that crops can be planted and grown successfully in deep trenches with sloping sides.

Centuries ago the Amu-Darya River, winding north from the mountains of southeastern Turkmenia, flowed across the Kara-Kum Desert to empty into the Caspian near Krasnovodsk, instead of losing itself in the Sea of Aral as now. One of the most ambitious of the Turkmen Republic's projects is to divert part of this river into its old bed, now known as the Uzboi. This would serve to bring fresh water and fertile silt to thousands of square miles of wasteland and to transform radically the economy of Turkmenia. Following a suggestion made by Lenin as far back as 1918, the Turkmenians have already converted to industrial use the extensive natural salt deposits north of Krasnovodsk in the Gulf of Kara-Bogaz-Gol, locally known as the Black Maw.

Today as in former times Turkmenia is noted throughout the world for its beautiful carpets, tending to deep red in color, like the gowns of the men and the dresses of the women. These much-prized, blood-red rugs, complicated in design and each

in itself a work of art, are still used in the Soviet East not merely as floor coverings, but to serve as tables, chairs, beds, and interior decorations of every sort. In Tsarist days the tens of thousands of Turkmenian carpet-weavers, the majority of them women, worked on an individual basis, but are now organized for the most part into co-operatives.

Another famous Turkmenian product is *caracul*, a black, glossy pelt of wavy pattern that comes from two-week-old lambs of a special breed that originated in a valley near Bukhara. Cotton-growing and its derivative industries are the basis of the Turkmen economy, with silk, fruit, cattle, fishing in the Caspian, and the production of oil and other minerals, all important. Headquarters for Turkmenia's newly developed industry and capital of the Republic is Ashkhabad, close to the Iranian border and looking off to the snow-tipped southern mountains. Ashkhabad is also the Turkmenian cultural center and is celebrated for its outdoor theaters, made possible by the mild climate and rainless skies.

Americans showed a pronounced interest in the territory now under the Turkmen Republic when an archeological expedition led by Raphael Pumpelly went there in 1903-04 and made far-reaching excavations of the ancient city of Anau near Ashkhabad. In fact, the moldering, sand-covered ruins of famous cities of the past are a commonplace in Turkmenia. Not far west of Ashkhabad lie the remains of Nissa, capital of the kingdom of Parthia in the third century B.C. Likewise in this same general vicinity, alongside the modern town of Mary, is historic Merv, the more or less complete skeleton of a dead city extending over an area of thirty-eight square miles. In the time of Genghis Khan, Merv was a great metropolis of enormous wealth; and the gaunt bones of its weather-beaten battlements, ruined palaces, and crumbling cupolas are a vivid reminder of the fate of empires and the transiency of human achievement.

To the north and east of Turkmenia is the most advanced of the Soviet Central Asiatic Republics, Uzbekistan. Its popula-

tion, numbering 6,600,000, is slightly greater than Sweden's, while its area of 160,000 square miles is somewhat less. The Uzbek S.S.R., extraordinarily rich in cotton, silk, sugar, and the products of modern industry, is one of the most prosperous of the Union Republics. And its people are as outstanding for their high level of education and culture as for their economic enterprise. The Uzbek Republic is the first Asiatic nation that has both thoroughly industrialized its economy and also thoroughly applied modern machine techniques to its agriculture.

The Uzbeks were formerly called "Sarts," from the old Turkish for "wander," and were so referred to in the Soviet Government's proclamation of December, 1917, to the Mohammedan peoples of the U.S.S.R. The term Uzbek comes from the name of a fourteenth-century chieftain of the Mongol Golden Horde, Uzbek Khan, who brought Mohammedanism to his subjects. There are 5,000,000 Uzbeks altogether in Central Asia, substantial minorities of them residing in the four other Union Republics of this region. Uzbekistan, together with Turkmenia, entered the U.S.S.R. as a constituent Republic in 1924.

The Uzbek S.S.R. is a dry, hot country with an overabundance of sunshine. But it is proud and admiring of its great life-giving sun and has put a representation of it, blazing and glorious, in the very center of the national coat of arms. Nicholas Mikhailov, prominent Soviet geographer, describes the characteristic climate-conditioned dress of the Uzbeks in his authoritative book, *Land of the Soviets*. "The men of Uzbekistan," he writes, "wear white clothing open to the waist, exposing their sunburned chests, and black skull caps embroidered in white. The women are dressed in brightly colored gowns of radiant pale yellows and reds. The girls' black hair is braided in innumerable thin plaits; old men in colored turbans ride along on donkeys."³

The economic and cultural life of the Uzbeks is centered in the southeastern part of the country. For the northern section, more than half of Uzbekistan as a whole, comprises the

Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Kara-Kalpak, meaning "Black Bonnet," after the shaggy sheepskin caps the inhabitants wear. The terrible Desert of Kyzyl-Kum, or "Red Sands," fans out over much of the Kara-Kalpak A.S.S.R. Though the Kara-Kalpaks raise some cotton, it is on the large, collectivized plantations to the south that is grown most of the high-grade fiber that amounts to 80 per cent of Soviet cotton production. Uzbekistan's phenomenal output of this staple, four times its total in prerevolutionary Russia and the highest yield per acre in the world, has gone far toward making the Soviet Union almost completely self-sufficient as regards cotton. Uzbekistan is also first among the Union Republics in the growing of silk.

Unlike the Government of the Tsars, which wished to see the raw materials of its Central Asiatic domain exploited to the limit on behalf of industrialists in European Russia, the Soviets have given every encouragement and assistance to the development of local Uzbek textile plants and other industries. Even prior to the stimulus of the war, Uzbek industrial production exceeded the combined aggregate of the nearby countries of Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan, whose total population is about eight times that of Uzbekistan.

Since there is comparatively little rainfall in Uzbekistan, its great fertility depends upon its vast, complex system of irrigation. This Republic is probably the most densely irrigated sector of the U.S.S.R. and is continually putting into effect new projects to reclaim its considerable desert lands, including the barren waste known as "Starvation Steppe." For example, in forty-five days in 1939 Uzbek farmers, over 150,000 in number, voluntarily dug the 160-mile Stalin Fergana Canal that tapped the abundant waters of the Syr-Darya River to bring fertility at last to the whole of the Fergana Valley, "The Pearl of Central Asia," and shared by the Uzbek, Tadzhik, and Kirgiz Republics. Thousands of women and children aided in this task, pitching in with hand shovels and carrying away dirt in baskets. Field kitchens were organized for the volunteer workers,

and native dancers and singers came out to the scene of labor to entertain them.

In 1942, after Nazi troops had occupied the Ukraine, the Soviet Government appealed to agricultural districts beyond the reach of Hitler to redouble their efforts for record crops. The Uzbeks came through by increasing their farming acreage 25 per cent, once again extending the irrigation network by channeling streams and rivers into new trunk and distributor canals. The Uzbek Republic utilizes its big dams not only for irrigation, but also for the development of hydroelectric power. One huge dam now under way will create an artificial lake, to be called the "Uzbek Sea," ten times larger than that formed by Boulder Dam in the United States.

During the war Uzbek peasants made a practice of "adopting" collective farms in regions freed by the westward-advancing Red Army. To such farms they sent as gifts livestock, food, wool, household equipment, and cash. Uzbekistan gave refuge to more than 2,000,000 homeless people from the war-torn areas of the Soviet Republics in Europe. The Uzbeks originated a slogan, "A refugee child in every family," and did everything possible to establish all the evacuees in useful jobs and to make them feel at home. The Uzbeks have a long tradition of hospitality, one of their oldest customs being to place the hand over the heart and bow as a sign of welcome for the stranger.

In the excavation of the Fergana Canal the Uzbek workers unearthed many valuable relics of ancient days and discovered over ninety buried settlements. This indicates why expert Soviet archeologists are usually assigned to any important irrigation project in this region. Uzbekistan, like Turkmenia, abounds in the remnants, many still well preserved, of historic cities and civilizations. Here in the Uzbek Republic, on a high plain with spurs of the Tien-Shan Range silhouetted in the purple distance, is jeweled Samarkand, cosmopolitan capital of the Emperor Tamerlane, who rode to his ephemeral glory over the

corpses of glittering empires and the dead bodies of anonymous millions.

Tamerlane's own blue-domed tomb and the turquoise-arched memorial erected to his Chinese wife are among the architectural marvels of Samarkand. On every side rise the magnificent Moslem colleges and mosques, lavishly decorated with their brilliantly enameled, many-colored tiles. And in the midst of all this splendor stands the Registan, described by Lord Curzon as "the most impressive public square in the world." Little wonder that the builders of this city stated in their stone inscriptions that they had so wrought in order "that earth might look with pride upon the heavens."

Only 150 miles away is Samarkand's age-long rival, Bukhara, city of a colorful, turbulent past and once second only to Mecca as a holy place of Islam. Not so long ago Bukhara was the leading center in Central Asia for the training of Moslem priests and used to turn out annually as many as 16,000 mullahs. Before the coming of the Soviets it was the capital of a native emirate whose emir was always a powerful figure throughout Central Asia. Cruel and autocratic were the emirs of Bukhara, renowned for their fierce treatment of political rebels and religious heretics. And from the highest building in the city, the Tower of Death, their minions hurled law-breakers to the pavement 200 feet below.

But for the Soviet Uzbeks, Tashkent, near the eastern border of the Republic, has outdistanced Samarkand and Bukhara in importance. Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan and formerly the seat of the Russian Governor General of Turkestan, is in population the fifth city of the Soviet Union. It is the pre-eminent economic and cultural center of both the Uzbek S.S.R. and Central Asia in general. Vice-President Henry A. Wallace visited this region in 1944 and stated: "At Tashkent, a city of a million people, I found experimental work in cotton which for its originality and effectiveness compares most favorably

with the best in the United States. Modern industry was also flourishing at this ancient seat of Eastern culture."

Since the 1917 Revolution, more than thirty higher educational institutions have been founded at Tashkent where none existed before. The German invasion served to increase Tashkent's cultural significance, because of the evacuation there of a number of artistic institutions, such as the Leningrad Conservatory of Music, the country's largest astronomical observatory, and various motion picture studios. Native Uzbek drama, opera, and ballet flourish in this city. Here, too, the important task goes on of collecting Uzbek folklore that has been handed down by word of mouth for generation after generation. One folk ballad recently discovered celebrates the exploits of an early national hero, Alpamysh by name. This work bears such a marked resemblance to Homer's *Odyssey* that some sort of cultural interrelationship between Central Asia and ancient Greece is suggested.

The composing of folk ballads has continued in Uzbekistan, as in the other Central Asian Republics, during the Soviet era. And I shall conclude this section with a typical Uzbek poem or folk tale written in 1925 and translated by Robert Magidoff, correspondent of the National Broadcasting Company in Moscow:

LENIN AND WARRIORS

Many men have crossed the face of the earth
Leaving no trace behind them,
But some men have left a trace behind them.
Though their time was short, it was great with noble or evil deeds.

Tamerlane crossed the earth long, long ago,
And left a bloody trail
Buried under ashes of burned cities.
Behind him he left a desert strewn with corpses,
And before him,
Wherever he saw light and joy,
He sowed grief and darkness.

Mighty was Tamerlane,
But he used his might for black deeds of destruction.

Genghis Khan swooped down with his hordes,
And he knew one law only:
To kill and rob.
He crossed sands and deserts, forests and steppes, cities and valleys,
And rivers of blood and tears flowed in his wake,
And hissing curses followed him.
Mighty was Genghis Khan,
But his savage hordes left no stone upon stone.

Iskander came from behind the seas, garbed in steel and gold,
The shapely iron helmets of his warriors glittering in the sun,
Their shields shining, their spears magnificent.
The sun took delight in the warriors
As they followed each other in deathlike silence,
Their spears sparkling.
Nothing could resist this iron wall of men,
Pressing forward shoulder to shoulder.
But they, too, left ruins behind them,
Even as Tamerlane and Genghis Khan.
Magnificent, young, and unconquerable was Iskander;
But his heart was as cruel and savage,
Craving destruction,
As was the heart of the wild Genghis Khan.

Invincible and renowned was the giant Ali,
But fame came to him enveloped in fire and blood,
For he would slaughter a hundred men at one stroke.

There was Nikolai, the Tsar over Russia,
Only a short time ago.
He, too, will linger in the memory of men.
He destroyed and plundered, massacring and enslaving nations.
His generals were garbed in gold,
But the whip in their hands
Was heavy as in the hands of the executioner.
The earth still remembers these names—
But to forget were better,
For they haunt the memory as curses do and horror.

Only one year has passed since the death of another man.
 He lived in the same land as Nikolai,
 And he ruled over the same people.
 Only one year has passed since the death of Lenin.
 He, too, will live in the memory of men,
 But men will remember him in a new way,
 For Lenin brought light to the land cast by Nikolai into darkness.
 He replanted orchards made fruitless by Tamerlane,
 Rebuilt cities destroyed by Genghis Khan.

Tamerlane, Genghis Khan, Iskander, and Nikolai were warriors.
 Wherever they saw light, they made darkness.
 Wherever they saw orchards, they made deserts.
 Wherever they saw life, they made death.
 Lenin! Out of darkness he brought forth light.
 Out of deserts he made orchards.
 Out of death—life!
 He was mightier than all these warriors taken together,
 For he alone built in eight years
 What they had destroyed in a thousand.⁴

The Tadzhik, Kirgiz, and Kazakh Republics

The picturesque Tadzhik and Kirgiz Republics, side by side in Central Asia, are both situated mainly in mountain territory and are the highest-lying Union Republics in the Soviet federation. They both have populations of about 1,500,000 and have faced similar problems of transportation, economics, and cultural reorientation. The rivers that bring life and fertility to the desert lowlands of Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, principally the Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya, rise among the lofty peaks and winding glaciers of Tadzhikistan or Kirgizia. Comparatively small portions of these two alpine Republics descend into the foothills and lower valleys.

The Tadzhik S.S.R., almost four times the size of Switzerland, was formerly within the emirate of Bukhara, later became an Autonomous Republic in the Uzbek S.S.R. and finally graduated into full Union status in 1929. Unlike the other peo-



A KIRGIZ HORSEWOMAN



KAZAKHS SEE THE TURKSIB RAILROAD FOR THE FIRST TIME



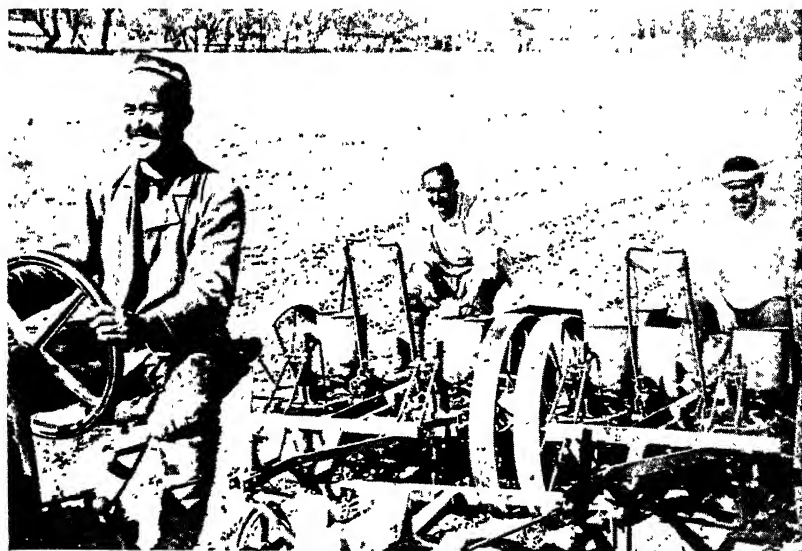
UZBEKS SEE THE OPENING OF THE FERGANA CANAL



KARA-KALPAK A.S.S.R.—A DEPUTY TO THE SUPREME SOVIET
AND HER FAMILY



TADZHIK S.S.R.—AT A SCHOOL IN KHOROG IN THE PAMIRS



PLANTING COTTON NEAR TASHKENT



TADZHIK GIRLS VISIT THE OBSERVATORY IN STALINABAD



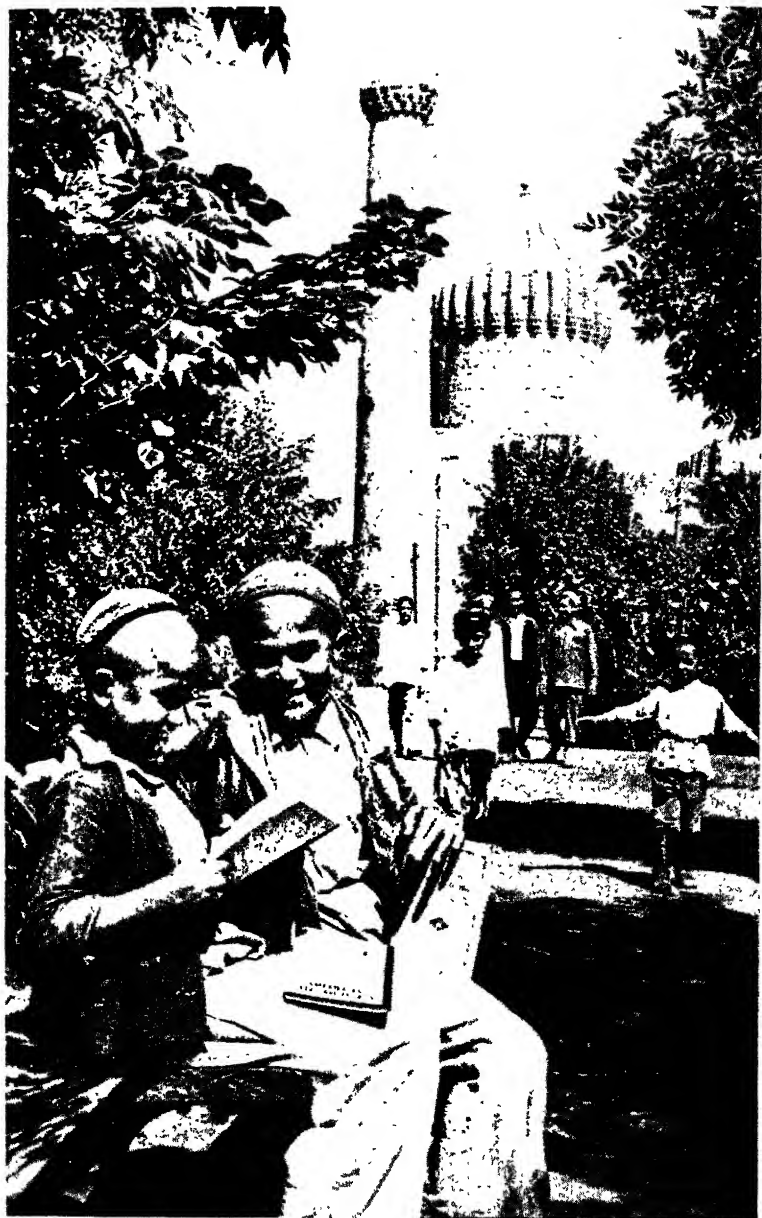
TURKMENIAN CARPET-WEAVERS



AN UZBEK RAILROAD WORKER



A KAZAKH MINER



SAMARKAND SCHOOL BOYS

ples of Soviet Central Asia, the Tadzhiks spring from Iranian stock instead of Turco-Tatar and therefore have a close ethnic bond with the Iranians (Persians). They are generally considered to be the most ancient people of Central Asia. Tall, straight-nosed and frequently blue-eyed, the Tadzhiks are probably more closely related to the so-called Aryans than the Germans or any other alleged "Nordics" in the West.

Long ago invaders sweeping over the plains drove the Tadzhiks, originally an agricultural people, into the mountains adjoining remote Afghanistan. There they adjusted themselves to their new circumstances as best they could, growing crops wherever seeds would take root on the steep slopes, raising the yak and other livestock, and hunting wild game. Cut off to a large extent from intercourse with neighboring peoples, the Tadzhiks were yet not so isolated that the Aga Khan, head of the fanatical Mohammedan sect of Ishmaelites and living as rich as Croesus in India, was unable to exact religious tribute from them. To him the Tadzhiks paid a large annual tithe in gold extracted by the most arduous and primitive means from their mountain fastnesses.

In 1917 the Tadzhiks were undoubtedly one of the poorest and most backward peoples in the whole Russian Empire. The mere names of some of their former city quarters, for example, in Khodzhent (now renamed Leninabad), give eloquent testimony to this point: "the district of eternal debtors"; "the district of the people who eat cow-dung"; "the district of the people who know not the taste of bread." The chief food of the Tadzhiks consisted, in fact, of flat cakes made from ground mulberries. Under the Tsars, only 0.5 per cent of the population in Tadzhikistan was literate, which was almost a record figure for even the old regime. Today more than 72 per cent of the people are literate.

The indigenous culture of the Tadzhiks, like that of other Central Asian peoples, centers to a considerable extent upon poetry, song, and music. The Tadzhiks had their Homer, a blind

bard by the name of Rudaki, who lived in the tenth century and went from town to town singing at the bazaars and other gathering places. Early Persian miniatures depict the same primitive musical instruments that are in use in the Tadzhik Republic at the present time. Reflecting the life of the people in the Pamir region was a song called "Poverty," sung when the men had to depart to do seasonal work far from home owing to lack of opportunity in their own vicinity.

A wide variety of wild animals inhabit the Tadzhik mountain country and even now prowling tigers frequently threaten the peasants. The Tadzhik mountaineers are great huntsmen, for the sake of food and furs rather than sport, and "still resort to falconry, using trained eagles or falcons, which, with eyes hooded, sit calmly on the arm of the hunter until a fox, hare, or wild goat is sighted. Once the hood is lifted the bird soars aloft, spots the prey and swoops down, killing the animal by the force of its fall. . . . The value of a trained eagle or falcon is very high, more than a hundred sheep."⁵

The Tadzhiks have a paradoxical saying, "Our south is our north," that happens to be true. For the only low-lying districts with a mild climate are in the north of the Tadzhik country; and there long-staple Egyptian cotton and all kinds of fruit grow in abundance. All of the southern section is high and mountainous, divided between the Tien-Shan, meaning "Celestial Mountains," and the towering Pamirs further south. The Pamirs here stand as a giant barrier separating the Soviet Union from India and China. They form the watershed for all of Central Asia and are often called the "Roof of the World."

In this region, soaring above the snow-clad crests all about them, are the two highest summits in the U.S.S.R., Stalin Peak, 24,590 feet above sea level, and Lenin Peak, just over 23,000 feet. Much of the Pamir Range is in the southeastern Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, which in area comprises nearly half of the Tadzhik Republic, but in population has a small minority of only about 40,000, Iranian in ethnic affinity.

The celebrated globe-trotter of medieval times, Marco Polo, visited this general vicinity in the thirteenth century. For a stretch of 200 miles, near the mighty Hindu Kush Mountains, the Soviet Gorno-Badakhshan Region is separated from India by a thin strip of Afghanistan territory that narrows down to only nine miles at one point.

This land of eternal snows and sub-Arctic climate, where even the bottoms of the valleys are all more than 13,000 feet in altitude, has been a happy hunting ground for Soviet scientists. Scientific expeditions have thoroughly explored and surveyed the region; discovered rich raw materials and archeological relics; observed cosmic rays from high altitudes; and studied the present significance and future possibilities of the deep mountain snows and the many huge glaciers as sources of water for the rivers and irrigation systems of Central Asia. Here in the Pamirs unfolds the longest valley glacier in the world, the gigantic Fedchenko, its icy mass and tentacles extending close to fifty miles.

One Soviet expedition uncovered in the ruins of an old castle far up in these mountains precious and unique manuscripts that threw new light on the ancient kingdom of Sogdiana that flourished in Central Asia over 2,500 years ago. The experts of this group were able to restore completely the lost language of Sogdiana. Yet another noteworthy discovery on the Pamir Plateau was the Vershik people, an isolated ethnic fragment of the Japhetic group whose principal home is the Caucasus and the Transcaucasus.

Recently the Tadzhik section of the Soviet Academy of Sciences sent an expedition into the nearly inaccessible Khuf Valley hidden away amongst the headwaters of the Panj River. The people of this valley still speak an ancient Iranian dialect in which rather curious distinctions are preserved in designating objects as of the masculine or feminine gender. "As some of the oldest inhabitants explained, the sky sends down rains as if to fertilize the earth, and therefore everything coming

from the sky—snow, rain, and hail—is of the masculine gender. . . . The water in a river fed by snow from the sky which has melted in the mountains is masculine. But the water in a spring which rises serenely from the earth is feminine.”⁸

Up until recently communications between Gorno-Badakhshan and the rest of Tadzhikistan were of a most primitive and dangerous sort. Native travelers would cross the swiftly flowing rivers in flimsy, boatlike contrivances made out of the inflated skins of goats and asses. Now Soviet engineers have built a splendid motor road, the highest on earth and much of it carved out of solid rock, up through the mountains to the Pamir Plateau. It connects Khorog, the capital of Gorno-Badakhshan, with Stalinabad, capital of the Tadzhik S.S.R. as a whole. New highways skirting the deep gorges and traversing the high passes have been constructed throughout the Republic, formerly separated into isolated localities by the all but impassable mountain ranges. Airplanes, too, have come to these alpine regions and are running on regular schedules.

In the country just northeast of Tadzhikistan there is an ancient legend that when Adam was driven out of the Garden of Eden by the Lord Almighty, he finally settled down beyond the mountains and founded Osh, said to be the oldest city in the world, and now a flourishing silk center in the Kirgiz Soviet Socialist Republic. Adam is supposed to have brought with him some silkworms, which, spinning a garment for his nakedness, got Osh's silk industry off to a promising start. This story about Adam fits in well with the quite widely held belief that the actual birthplace of the human race was in what is now Kirgizia.

But no one thinks that the Kirgiz themselves were the original inhabitants of this region. No certain trace can be found here of these broad-faced Turco-Tatars until the thirteenth century. Previous to that they had wandered over much of Asia, having been reported at one time as far east as Peking. In more recent times the Kirgiz came under the sway of the Khanate of Kokand and later fought hard against the onslaught of the Tsar's

armies. Before 1917 they were mistakenly called "Karakirgiz," while the Kazakhs to the north were misnamed "Kirgiz." This is why the great northern plain in the Kazakh S.S.R. is still known as the "Kirgiz Steppe."

The Kirgiz were mountain nomads living in black felt tents (yurts) or mud huts with flat roofs on top of which they stored their haystacks in winter. Anna Louise Strong tells of her visit to Kirgizia in 1927 and of discovering the curious way in which these people then measured land. "The measure," she writes, "was either a 'cheksi,' an apronful, or a 'cheicrek,' a horseload; it meant as much land as an apronful or a horseload of barley would sow. They did not think of land as real estate or even as farms. Land was only something to roam over; they needed to measure only enough of it to sow fodder in the winter encampments before leaving for high pasture in the spring." ⁷

Like so many of the minorities under the Tsar, the Kirgiz lived in poverty, uncleanness, and ill health. Most of them were washed with some semblance of completeness only twice during their careers in human society, immediately after birth and after death. Before the Revolution their population was rapidly declining, having decreased by 10 per cent between 1903 and 1913. No more than 2 per cent of the people were literate and they had no written alphabet. It is not surprising to find that the Kirgiz were quite savage in some of their customs. They liked to bury their criminals alive or have them dragged behind wild horses or brand their foreheads with hot irons.

Today Kirgizia presents a very different picture, having come a long way since entering the Russian Federated Republic as an Autonomous Republic in the early twenties. It became a Union Republic in 1936. During the more than quarter-century since 1917, the Kirgiz people have more and more settled down on farms and developed a stable agricultural life. They have increased the area under cultivation by 75 per cent, chiefly through intensive irrigation that included the building of 4,000

new canals. Modern collective methods have been introduced into the growing of cotton and sugar beets and the raising of cattle among the fine pastures of the mountain slopes and plateaus. There, too, are bred the small, wiry Kirgiz horses, so noted for their qualities of endurance.

But the Kirgiz have not neglected their industrial development either. Factories and hydroelectric plants are now a commonplace in this land; coal and other minerals are being mined on a large scale. Recent prospecting has disclosed that Kirgizia is one of the first among the Union Republics in its deposits of rare metals, hidden away in mountains relatively young from a geological viewpoint. Since it is reliably estimated that, despite the immense discoveries of natural resources under Soviet leadership, as much as one-half of the U.S.S.R. remains to be prospected properly, present figures on the amount of raw materials in the different Republics are always open to revision.

The characteristic landscape of Kirgizia is represented in the national coat of arms, where a refulgent sun is shown setting behind snow-capped peaks. Although the Kirgiz Republic is not so compartmentalized by high mountains as Tadzhikistan, various offshoots of the Tien-Shan Range have given it plenty of transportation problems. Accordingly a vast amount of railway and motor road construction has taken place, outstanding being the Great Kirgizian Highway leading into China and southern Kirgizia from Frunze, capital of the Republic and named after a top Soviet military leader in the Civil War, born in this city.

It was in the foothills of the Tien-Shan, near Frunze, that in 1931 six Moscow workers on vacation discovered a species of dandelion, *kok-sagyz*, the roots of which contain a substantial percentage of natural rubber. The leader of this expedition, which combined recreation with scientific investigation, was a twenty-two-year-old dyeworker by the name of Bukhanevich. On the very last day of their trip, Bukhanevich and his comrades noticed the children in a little Kirgizian village chewing away on something that seemed to give them great satisfaction.

Asked what it was, the children said: "Oh, it has no name. It's just ordinary chewing grass, *kok-sagyz*."

Bukhanevich and his friends at once realized that this simple mountain "chewing grass" might prove extremely important and so brought back to the special Moscow Rubber Institute plenty of *kok-sagyz* plants and seeds. Before long expert scientific analysis and experimentation established *kok-sagyz* as the best rubber-producing plant in the Soviet Union. Ten acres of it will yield around a ton of rubber. Since *kok-sagyz* flourishes in almost any soil, the Soviet authorities soon started growing it in many different parts of the country and were devoting millions of acres to it even before the Nazi attack. The Soviet Government also sent quantities of the *kok-sagyz* seed to the United States; and since 1942 experiments have been going on here in the cultivation of this most remarkable of dandelions.

Just as spectacular as anything in the realm of economics has been the cultural advance of the Kirgizians. In this regard the most significant single step was the acquisition of a written alphabet. By 1939 the literacy figure in this Republic had jumped to 70 per cent. Progress and socialization, however, have not done away with the authentic cultural institutions of the Kirgiz people. And they still dress in their national costume, which is marked by the quilted gown and the white felt hat with black flaps.

If you look on the map of Central Asia or the Soviet Union, you will see a huge country in one solid block that extends from the neighborhood of the lower Volga River more than 1,600 miles east to the borders of China, and from the Trans-Siberian Railway almost 1,000 miles south to Uzbekistan. This is the vast Soviet Socialist Republic of Kazakhstan, with an area of over 1,000,000 square miles. Next to the Russian S.F.S.R. it is the biggest Union Republic in the land of the Soviets and in itself alone a third as large as the United States of America.

Kazakhstan became an Autonomous Republic of the Russian S.F.S.R. in 1924 and a full Union Republic of the U.S.S.R. in

1936, when the new Soviet Constitution was adopted. Its population is about 6,450,000, a little smaller than that of the Uzbek Republic, and includes considerable minorities of Great Russians and Ukrainians. The Kazakhs themselves number approximately 3,250,000 and, as I stated earlier, were formerly mis-called "Kirgiz." The words "Kazakh" and "Cossack" come from the same source and originally meant "A man who has separated himself from his people." But despite this consideration and the fact that both Kazakhs and Cossacks are crack riders and tough fighters, there is no ethnic relation between the two groups.

Some time after Genghis Khan marched through this land in the thirteenth century, the Kazakhs became organized into three main divisions known as the Great Horde, the Middle Horde, and the Little Horde. Later a fourth division, the Inner Horde, came into being. These various Hordes were subdivided right down to the small communities or *auls*, consisting of from five to fifteen tents. The Kazakhs are another Turco-Tatar people and are generally of medium build, black hair and swarthy complexion. Their basic clothing has been sheepskin and felt. They are Moslems in religion, but owing to their unsettled nomadic life have followed very irregularly such traditional Islamic practices as the veiling of women.

Until recently the Kazakhs were roving herdsmen wandering with their big flocks and herds over the unending steppe and desert, living the greater part of their lives in the saddle, and moving their tents and scanty possessions from place to place on the backs of camels. Subject to recurrent droughts and famines, the Kazakhs led a precarious existence in which the hardships of the climate, insufficient food, and a complete ignorance of hygiene considerably outbalanced the healthy aspects of a vigorous outdoor existence. For example, in a severe blizzard sweeping over the Kazakh region in the early nineteenth century, the Inner Horde lost 30,000 oxen, 280,000 horses, and 1,000,000 sheep in two days.

The Tsarist Empire first undertook its "protection" of the Kazakhs in the early eighteenth century, but did not succeed in bringing this whole people under its rule until the end of the nineteenth. The proud, fiercely battling Kazakhs proved rather difficult to deal with and were continually breaking out in rebellion. The Tsars never even attempted to use them in the Russian armies. But in the Nazi-Soviet war the Kazakhs distinguished themselves as heroic and resourceful soldiers and officers in the Soviet forces. In numbers they came sixth among the nationalities awarded military decorations.

The average Kazakh is naturally a first-rate horseman, having ridden bareback and otherwise since early childhood. In this respect the Kazakhs are like the cowboys of the American West. The small and sturdy Kazakh horses or ponies, like those of the Kirgiz, make the finest of mounts. Some of the best divisions of the Red Army cavalry are either composed of Kazakhs or have been trained on wiry Kazakh horses going through their paces and formations on the interminable Kazakh plain.

In its climate, expanse, and great business of stock-breeding, northern Kazakhstan is much like the Rocky Mountain states of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah, while the southern part of the Kazakh Republic is reminiscent of New Mexico and Arizona. The mountains of the Kazakh country are mostly along its southeastern fringes near the Chinese border. In natural resources Kazakhstan is even richer than America's Rocky Mountain region. It contains more than half the Soviet Union's total known deposits of copper, lead, and zinc; and has valuable gold ore near the Sea of Aral. The Kounrad copper mine on the desert shores of Lake Balkhash is the Soviet Anaconda.

The Karaganda coal basin is the third largest in the U.S.S.R. Here some of the best seams are so close to the surface that they can be worked directly by steam shovels that gouge out the coal and load it onto trains alongside. Near the Caspian Sea are the Emba oil fields, which account for almost a third of Soviet petroleum production. Nor does Kazakhstan lag behind in

agriculture, since its vast steppes are among the most fertile in the Soviet Union, with the area sown to crops tremendously extended since the Nazi invasion. In the north the Kazakh collective farmers grow wheat and rye; in the south, cotton, sugar beets, rice, and many varieties of fruit.

The capital of the Kazakh S.S.R. is Alma-Ata, meaning "Father of Apples," a beautiful city situated on a height in view of snow-topped mountains rose-tinted in the sun. Alma-Ata, its population risen sevenfold since 1917, is both an industrial and a cultural center. It shared with Tashkent the influx of professional people and institutions from the war zones and became known as the Hollywood of the Soviet Union because so much of the motion picture industry moved there.

Alma-Ata is about 150 miles from the Chinese frontier, which parallels that of Kazakhstan for some 800 miles. From 1937, when the Japanese attacked China, until 1942, after Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R., a substantial flow of Soviet supplies went from the Kazakh Republic to the forces of Chiang Kai-shek. Alma-Ata was the chief assembly point where munitions, fuel, food, medicine and other goods were transferred from train to truck for the long haul across Sinkiang and other Chinese provinces to the wartime capital at Chungking. This route into the heart of China followed the old caravan trails and rivaled the Burma Road in the aid it brought to the embattled Chinese.

But neither these supplies for China nor many a significant economic accomplishment in southeastern Kazakhstan would have been possible without the general improvement of communications in that remote region. Most important of all in this respect was the completion in 1930 of the Turkestan-Siberian Railway, the great "Turksib" running from the Tashkent-Chkalov trunk line through Alma-Ata north to Semipalatinsk, literally "The Seven Tents," and Novosibirsk, industrial center and junction on the Trans-Siberian. Over 1,500

miles long, the Turksib Railroad opened up for speedy economic development the entire eastern part of Kazakhstan, linking it with the rest of Central Asia to the west and with all of Siberia to the north.

The building of the middle stretch of the Turksib was one of the most dramatic achievements of Soviet Russia's First Five-Year Plan of economic construction. In the heat and dust of the dry steppe thousands upon thousands of primitive Kazakh herdsmen, who had never before in their lives seen a railroad track or a locomotive, worked strenuously on the Turksib and helped push it through in record time. One of the chief supervisors on the project was Bill Shatoff, formerly a well-known I.W.W. leader in the United States. Soon after the last spike was driven, long freight trains rolled along the Turksib carrying cotton from Central Asia to Siberia, and coal and grain from Siberia to Central Asia.

The Turksib Railway aroused in the Kazakhs immense enthusiasm and inspired many a native bard or poet to songs and poems about "the giant bands of steel" and "the iron chug horse." One poet was moved to write an entire poem entitled, "The U.S.S.R.—Express," the opening lines of which were:

Our Union is an Express, flying over bridges,
Past verdant meadows, across the broad acres.

The Kazakhs are in fact a most artistic people. And so it is not surprising that their national hero is their leading poet and minstrel, Dzhambul. A town is named after him in southern Kazakhstan and in 1938 the seventy-fifth anniversary of his singing was celebrated throughout the Soviet Union. Dzhambul died in 1945 at the ripe age of ninety-nine, but until almost the end was still accompanying himself on the strings of the native *dombra* as he sang his own verses.

Siberia—Second North America

The vast Soviet territory lying east of the Ural Mountains and north of Central Asia has traditionally been known as Siberia. It is almost twice as large as continental United States and is all part of the enormous Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic that stretches over the heartland of the Eurasian continent from the Atlantic system of inner seas to the Pacific Ocean itself. Siberia was a place of ill repute under the Tsars and universally famed as the cold, dreaded, barren land to which Russian political exiles and religious dissenters were sent by the tens of thousands.

Except along its southern fringe of rolling steppe, Soviet Siberia is characterized by two great geographic zones known as the *tundra* and the *taiga*. The tundra belt is in the Far North beyond the Arctic Circle and consists of desolate wind-swept wastes with permanently frozen subsoil and unending marshes. These marshes turn into solid ice most of the year, yet are resplendent with many-colored flowers during the short summers. To the south the tundra merges with the vast taiga belt of dense, unbroken forest—interspersed with junglelike swamps—that covers the larger part of Siberia.

This immense taiga territory, stretching on the average 1,000 miles from north to south and more than 3,000 miles from west to east, is the biggest tract of virgin woodland on earth. The trees of the taiga are predominantly of a coniferous variety such as spruce, pine, fir, cedar, and larch. Flowing northward through both taiga and tundra are numerous rivers, including three of the world's mightiest: the Ob, the Yenisei, and the Lena, each of them a most important artery of communication and carrier of civilization.

The Soviets have drastically changed the social and economic aspects of the whole Siberian region. Under the Five-Year Plans they have transformed this part of Asia, which Sir Bernard

Pares terms "a second North America," into one of the wealthiest and most productive sections of the U.S.S.R. Since 1917 they have rapidly developed Siberia's untold riches in natural resources, largely untapped or undiscovered under the old regime, and have transformed this eastern empire into a bulwark of economic strength and reserve power. It was an asset of infinite value to the Soviet Union in the Nazi war. And its economic expansion also laid the basis for Soviet power in the Far East, so that the U.S.S.R. was well prepared to resist Japanese encroachments and finally to join the other United Nations in the last stages of the war against Japan. Naturally, the far-reaching developments in Siberia have greatly altered the life and culture of its inhabitants, numbering about 28,000,000.

The bulk of this hardy population are Great Russians, with a considerable admixture of Ukrainians. Many of these Slavs, frequently called Siberiaks, have settled recently in western or eastern Siberia with the purpose of helping to build up the country, of becoming collective farmers and winning the wilderness for agriculture, of becoming workers in giant industrial projects such as those centering around the Ural Mountains district, the Kuznetsk Basin and the Far Eastern territory bordering on the Sea of Japan. Many others are children, grandchildren, or descendants of political exiles, convicts, religious nonconformists, former serfs, or those adventurous Cossacks who did so much to conquer Siberia for the Tsars.

In general the Russians, Ukrainians, and others whose origin was in western Russia live along or near the line of the Trans-Siberian, longest railroad on the face of the globe. Like the American pioneers they utilized the abundant materials of the forest to construct one-story log cabins or larger buildings also made from heavy, rough-hewn, unpainted logs. Except for blinds painted white, these sturdy dwellings resembled closely those of the average frontier settlement in the United States. And while a more modern type of architecture has been de-

veloping recently in Siberia, the typical construction still remains that of strong, wooden logs.

In addition to the Slav elements in Soviet Siberia, there are many native peoples, predominantly of Mongol or Turco-Tatar racial stock. Although these groups total around 100, most of them are numerically quite small, so that their aggregate population does not exceed 1,000,000. These indigenous peoples and tribes, probably the most backward of all the ethnic groups in the old Tsarist Empire, were nomads or semi-nomads who for centuries roamed over the immense, sparsely settled spaces of Asia, hunting, fishing, and grazing their cattle or reindeer on the ever-shifting pastures.

The Russian imperial expansion eastward resembled the American expansion westward, not only in the opening up of rich new territories, but also in the treatment of the aboriginal inhabitants. For ruthless violence and exploitation characterized Tsarist policy toward the peoples of Siberia, many of whom had rapidly declined in numbers or had almost entirely disappeared when the Soviets won control. Though some of the Siberian natives fought back hard against the Russian conquerors, on the whole they resisted with far less vigor and spirit than did the American Indians against the encroaching whites.

Americans making a study of the Soviet Siberian peoples for the first time are usually quite excited to find that a number of them are of the same ethnic origin as the American Indian. This is true not only of the Far Eastern Chukchis and Eskimos who live close to Bering Strait, but also of the Oirots and Buriat-Mongolians in far-off southern Siberia and the Evenkis and Nentsi up north near the Arctic Circle. These peoples are similar to the Indians in physical characteristics, in certain customs and religious ceremonials, and in basic living habits such as the use of tents constructed from a framework of poles covered with skins or bark. Some of them clearly share the Indian's aquiline nose, piercing eyes, and high cheek-bones.

The noted anthropologist, the late Dr. Franz Boas of Colum-

bia University, states: "The physical relationship of the American native to the east Asiatic is closer than that to any other race. Straight, dark hair; wide, rather flat face; heavy nose; tendency to a Mongoloid eye are common to both of them. Locally, types are found that are so much alike that it would be rather difficult to say whether an individual is an Asiatic or an American."⁸ Another leading anthropologist, the late Dr. Ales Hrdlicka of the Smithsonian Institution, agreed with Dr. Boas and believed that the American Indian stems from Mongol stock. I once heard Dr. Hrdlicka recount how, hearing the strains of a familiar, plaintive type of music in a Mongolian town of eastern Asia, he thought for a moment that he must be back among the Indians of the United States.

In any case, the consensus of scientific opinion is that ages ago, probably in prehistoric times, the distant ancestors of the Indians migrated from Asia across Bering Strait, which is only fifty-six miles wide and interspersed with islands, or across a vanished land bridge in that vicinity. Then these ancient, intercontinental wanderers gradually spread over most of North, Central, and South America. There may well have been successive migrations. And some of these Asiatic tribes eventually developed into what we know as the Eskimos, who penetrated as far as Greenland. Eskimos today live on both the Soviet and Alaskan sides of Bering Strait and are nearly identical in physique, customs, and even language.

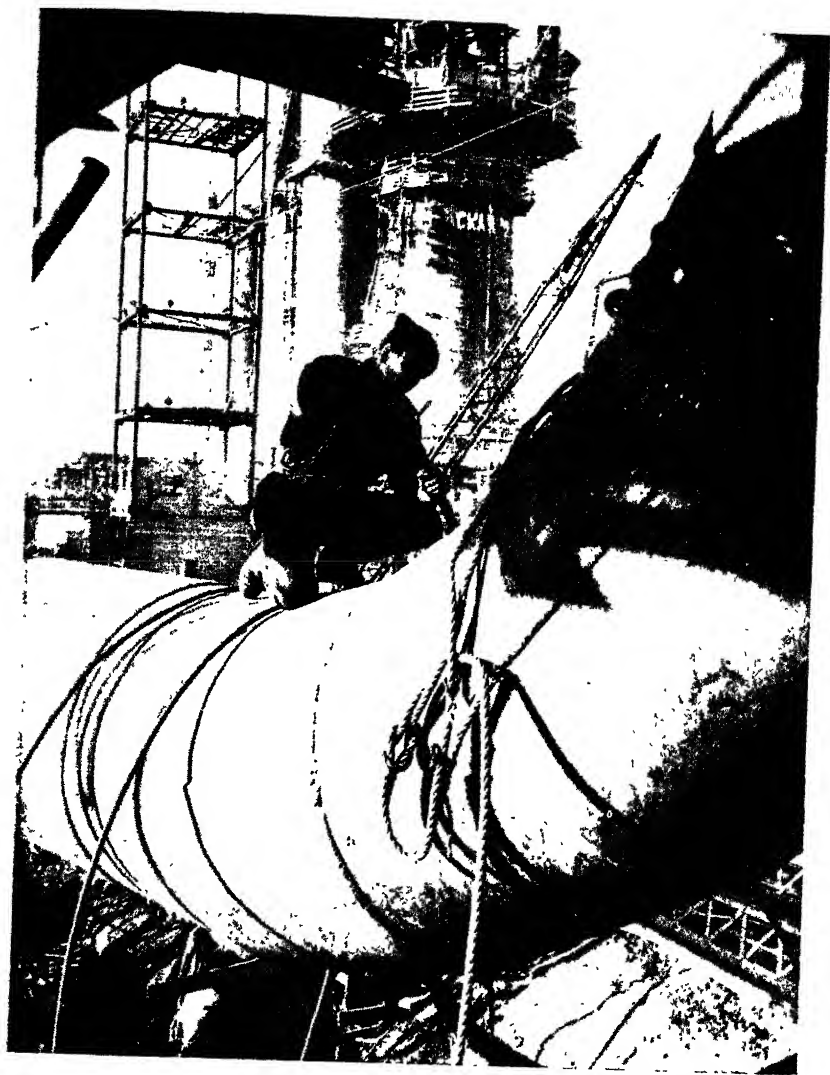
If you go east from Soviet Central Asia across the boundary of the Kazakh Republic into Siberia, the very first people you meet are the Oirots, who have an Autonomous Region of their own in the midst of the wild and rugged Altai Mountains. This district is Siberia's Switzerland; and though it looks quite small on a map of the Soviet Union, actually it is over twice as big as Switzerland itself. The Oirots number about 50,000 and include Kalmyk elements who are of the same origin as the Kalmyks who live near the Volga River. These Oirots, as I indicated earlier, are one of the Siberian peoples most akin to the Ameri-

can Indian. Their traditional dwellings were *chooms*, cone-shaped, bark-covered tents very similar to tepees. And until they came under Soviet influence, these Oirots were nomad herds-men, hunters and fishermen, like so many of the Indian tribes.

Just beyond the Oirots to the east is the Khakass Autonomous Region with a mixed population of Turkic and Mongolian extraction. Its southern section borders on the Tannu Tuva People's Republic, a Mongol territory that was once a colony of Tsarist Russia but whose national independence was recognized by the Soviet Government in 1918.* On the east this Region is partly bounded by the upper reaches of the Yenisei River. Across the river at one point is the village of Shushenskoe, where Lenin spent three years in exile, from 1897 to 1900. The Khakassians are one of the numerous Soviet peoples for whom Soviet philologists had to work out a written language.

The yellow-skinned Khakass nomads are of the same stock as the Buriat-Mongols who live still further east along the shores of Lake Baikal, largest inland body of water in Soviet Siberia and all of eastern Asia. In 1923 the Buriat-Mongols set up an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic which is about the size of Norway. Near by there are two small branches of this people, the Ust-Ordin Buriat-Mongols and the Agin Buriat-Mongols, both of whom have organized their own National Districts. (The word *Mongol* is derived from *mong*, meaning brave.) All the Soviet peoples of Mongolian origin are closely related ethnically to the Mongols across the frontier in various provinces of China. The important Buriat-Mongolian A.S.S.R. has a long boundary to the south in common with the huge Mongolian People's Republic (Outer Mongolia), an independent state that collaborates closely with the Soviet Union. From the spur line of the Trans-Siberian Railway at Kyakhta goods go by camel or motor caravan into Mongolia and central China.

* In October, 1945, it was announced that Tannu Tuva had joined the Soviet Union as an Autonomous Region.



Margaret Bourke-White

MAGNITOGORSK—INDUSTRY COMES TO SIBERIA



DEPUTIES FROM YAKUTIA TO THE SUPREME SOVIET



MAGNITOGORSK STEEL WORKERS



A NENETS HUNTER



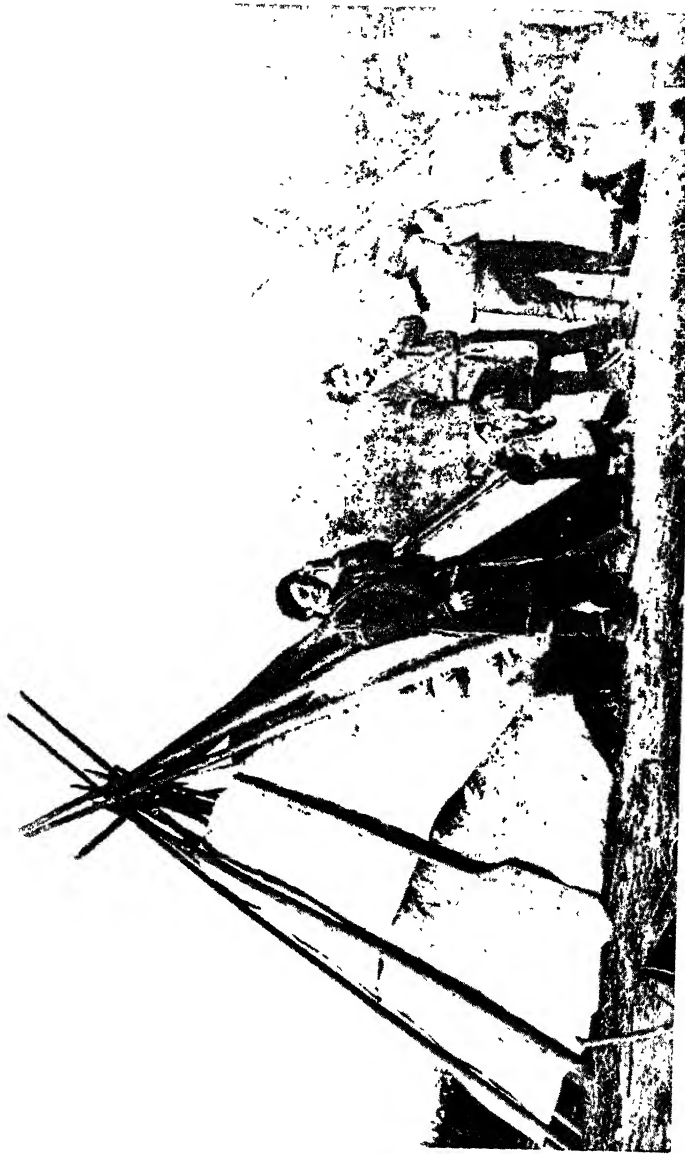
A BURIAT-MONGOLIAN SHEPHERD



OJIBWA MOTHER AND CHILD

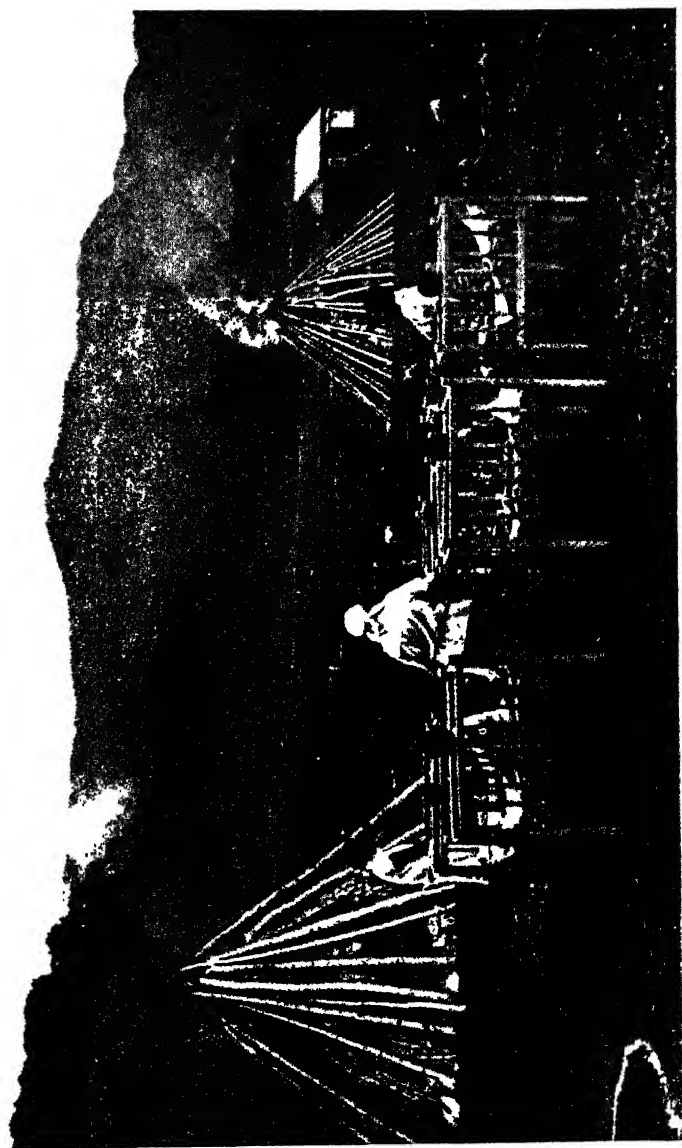


A BURIAT-MONGOLIAN COLLECTIVE FARMER



Northern Sea Route Administration, U.S.S.R.

EVENKIS IN FRONT OF THEIR BIRCH-BARK WIGWAM



AN OIROT DAY NURSERY



AN OIROT FARM GIRL

The Buriat-Mongolian Republic, containing approximately 570,000 inhabitants, is the most populous national subdivision in Siberia. The Buriats are another Soviet people, nomadic for centuries past, who resemble the American Indian. They have high cheek-bones, broad noses, and slanting eyes. Most familiar type of Buriat conveyance was the *kibitka*, a vehicle enclosed with thick felt or leather and shifting to runners during the snows of winter. In Tsarist days Buriat-Mongolia was one of the most poverty-stricken and generally backward portions of the Empire, with illiteracy as high as 96 per cent.

Its prevailing religion was Lamaism, a modified form of the Buddhist faith originating in Tibet and taking its name from *lama*, meaning yellow, the conspicuous color of the priest's cap. This religion had a strong hold over the Buriats and it is said that for every three adults there was one monk or lama. The lamas, a veritable army of them, lived in monasteries called lamaseries, which owned much of the choicest land in the country. A typical old Buriat belief was that water is defiling; and hence the washing of even dishes and clothes was discouraged. It is no wonder that the Buriats gained a reputation for being dirty and unhealthy. Hard liquor sold by Russian traders also played havoc among them. And during the thirty years prior to the Revolution, their population declined by a third.

Since the Soviets came into power, life in the Buriat-Mongol Republic has drastically changed for the better. As among most of the traditionally nomad peoples of the U.S.S.R., collective farming and stock-raising have been introduced with splendid results. The new collective system has vastly increased agricultural production and has also led most of the natives to adopt a more settled mode of existence. For the first time, too, the great natural resources of the region are being developed, including the all but untouched timber reserves that cover 78 per cent of its area. Whereas under the Tsars the entire industry of this land consisted of one wine distillery, now enormous industrial enterprises are being operated full blast.



The capital of the Republic, Ulan-Ude, through which passes the Trans-Siberian, boasts a large plant devoted to the manufacture and repairing of locomotives and other railroad equipment. Gold, silver, tin, tungsten, copper, manganese, and coal are being extensively mined. One of the most striking undertakings in Buriat-Mongolia is the direct conversion underground of coal into gas through combustion, so that the labor of mining is avoided. The gas is piped to the surface and then put to various uses.

Fish canneries, based on the plentiful catches of Lake Baikal, are growing in number. Fresh-water seals also inhabit this lake, which is the deepest in the world and may once have been connected with the open sea. Game likewise abounds in the Baikal area, which swarms with no less than 500 different species of animal. Here is found some of the finest sable in the Soviet Union. The black pelt of this small quadruped is one of the rarest of all furs and was often handed over to various conquerors as tribute by the Buriat-Mongols. So valuable was it that it came to be known as "soft gold."

Biggest of all the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics and, next to the Russian Republic itself, the largest national division within the U.S.S.R., is enormous Yakutia to the north and east of Buriat-Mongolia. The Yakut A.S.S.R., twice the size of Alaska, extends more than 1,000 miles north to the Arctic Ocean, upon whose icy waters it has a coastline of over 1,500 miles. This Siberian Republic is very thinly populated and has only about 400,000 inhabitants, of whom all but some 20 per cent are native Yakuts. The Yakuts are one of the few Turco-Tatar peoples who were won over to the Russian Orthodox religion by the Russians.

Yakutia is the coldest region in the entire Soviet Union and parts of it are actually colder than the North Pole. In fact, Oimekon and Verkhoyansk, where the thermometer has registered more than 90 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, are the coldest known places on earth. These towns are located in Siberia's

northeast mountainous zone which has long been regarded as "the icebox of the world." In the Yakut A.S.S.R. the rivers freeze to a depth of six and one-half feet and the soil itself sometimes over 650 feet.

The forest wilderness or taiga of Yakutia extends over at least half its area. The most valuable tree here is the larch, which is exceptionally hard, durable, and rot-resistant and is often used in place of iron girders. Besides its natural wealth in timber, the Yakut Republic possesses extensive reserves of oil, coal, tin, iron, and gold. Gold is the leading product of the Republic and is found in abundance along the northward-flowing rivers. Richest deposits are those on the upper Aldan River, a tributary of the wide Lena River, which is the main channel for transportation in this country. A Soviet prospector discovered new fields in 1923 and immediately reported them to the state authorities. These Aldan mines, a regular Siberian Klondike, were of course automatically classified as public property and were soon being exploited systematically by the Soviet Gold Trust.

Yakut hunters and trappers find the boundless, primeval woods of their Republic a veritable paradise; and furs are the second most valuable product of the nation. The hunters have a reputation for shooting the smaller game through the eye, so as not to damage the pelts. And their marksmanship is so excellent that in the Red Army they are invariably selected as special sharpshooters or snipers. In this region hundreds of thousands of years ago roamed the huge, prehistoric mammoth, an extinct species of elephant, larger on the average than the present Indian type, that became adapted to cold climates. In Arctic sections of Yakutia, where many of the great mammoths got bogged down in the marshy tundra, tusks and sometimes complete carcasses of the animal are so well preserved in the frozen mud that the salvaging of mammoth ivory is a sizeable industry.

The nomadic Yakuts always had large reindeer herds, which served as a source of both food and leather. Since the coming of

the Soviets, scientific breeding and collective reindeer farms have been introduced. The raising of horses and cattle has also made notable progress under the stimulus of up-to-date methods. In agriculture generally, in a most retarded state in the old days and totally unfamiliar to the majority of Yakuts, machinery is rapidly replacing reindeer as the main motive power. A new species of wheat called *yakutianka*, and especially adapted to the soil and climate, is now being grown in Yakutia.

Transportation and communication, however, still remain a difficult problem in this land of wilderness, mountains, and ice. For example, the Republic's post-office department, according to Mr. William Mandel in his scholarly book *The Soviet Far East*, lists as "employees" 3,500 reindeer, 1,200 horses and 1,000 dogs. It also "uses planes, trucks and motor-boats by the hundred. . . . Pack animals deliver the mail during the spring thaw, when cars cannot leave the single highway. Maintaining telegraph lines is a deed of heroism under circumstances where a single line stretches 900 miles through an uninhabited sub-Arctic forest in a country where winter means incredible blizzards and 60 below. But it is done."⁹

The backward natives of the Yakut Republic used to live, together with their domestic animals, in smoky *yurts*, similar to the wigwam of the American Indian, or in low-ceilinged huts with dirt floors. In this land of sub-zero cold and raging blizzards, a fire within the dwelling is such an absolute necessity during most of the year that the word for house, *dom* in Russian, became widely metamorphosed into *dym*, originally meaning *smoke*.

In 1942 the late Wendell Willkie passed through Yakutia on his trip to the Soviet Union and was much impressed by recent progress in this part of Siberia. And he devoted a chapter to the subject in his popular book *One World*. There he writes how in winter the Yakuts "lived on spoiled fish and roots; disease and famine decimated what was once a hardy people. During the time of the Tsars Yakutia was famous for syphilis, tuber-

culosis, and furs.”¹⁰ The head of the Yakut A.S.S.R. informed Mr. Willkie that in prerevolutionary days 98 per cent of the people were illiterate whereas now 98 per cent are literate.

In Yakutsk, a city of 50,000 and capital of the Republic, Mr. Willkie inspected a fine new library of 550,000 volumes “in an old but well-lighted building, clean and well staffed. . . . The machine for delivering books to the reading room worked like a primitive country well. But the reading room was well occupied. The card catalogues were modern and complete. The records showed that over 100,000 people—many had come from the countryside around—had used books during the past nine months. Special exhibits hung on the walls. Soviet periodicals and reference books were on the open shelves. There was an air of great efficiency about the place. This was a library any town of its size might well be proud of.”¹¹

This library can be taken as typical of the enormous cultural advance made by the Yakuts under the Soviets. Under the old regime the educated people consisted almost entirely of exiles from European Russia who served as local teachers, physicians, and technicians. Some of the most able and eminent exiles lived in Yakutia for a time, carried on valuable scientific work and founded an excellent museum in Yakutsk. “By the time of the Bolshevik Revolution,” writes Mr. Owen Lattimore, “there existed a strange situation up under the curve of the Polar Circle. Here, in a land of widespread hunger, political tyranny, peculiarly brutal frontier conditions and low cultural development, working under conditions which exposed them to unheralded and arbitrary suppression, but nevertheless working, were some of the best minds of the twentieth century.”¹²

In 1917 schoolchildren in Yakutia were mainly those of Russian parents. Now the Yakut people as a whole are being trained in the many new schools, colleges, and technical institutions of the Republic. By 1940 there were 425 schools as compared with 141 in 1917. The Yakuts read and study textbooks published in their own language, which had no adequate written alphabet

before. They have built twenty-five motion picture houses and instituted traveling movie shows which bring the modern cinema to the outlying parts of the Republic. And a special Yakut Theater of Drama produces plays in the native language with native Yakuts as the actors. There is little doubt that in cultural as well as economic development the Yakuts have taken the leadership among the Soviet peoples of the North.

Tribes of the North and Far East

Yakutia's rigorous climate, difficult living conditions and, to some extent, recent progress correspond with what we find in the territories of the other chief peoples of the Soviet North. There are about twenty-five of these tribes, several numbering no more than a few hundred. Seven of them are organized into their own National Districts in Siberia. The Chukot, Evenki, Taimyr, and Yamalo-Nenets N.D.'s all lie partly or altogether above the Arctic Circle. The Komi-Permiak, Koriak, and Ostiak-Vogul N.D.'s are somewhat further south, but even so come close to the Arctic Circle. An eighth National District, the Nenets, is situated in the far northeast of Soviet Europe and within the Arctic Circle. A number of the Nenets people also inhabit the Yamalo-Nenets and Taimyr Districts.

Most of these National Districts are very large in area and very small in population. The Taimyr N.D., for instance, is bigger than the state of Texas, but in 1926 had only 8,000 people. Early Russian explorers and traders called a number of the northern tribes in Siberia by the name *Tungus* and classified them further by such appellations as the Reindeer-Tungus, the Horse-Tungus, the Dog-Tungus, and the Forest-Tungus. The Soviets have insisted on giving these peoples their right names and this has resulted in renaming in most cases. In some instances the old name was downright insulting, as in respect to the Nentsi, who were formerly called Samoyeds, meaning "people who devour one another." Usually the correct name for each

group is, as with the Nentsi, simply the native word for *men* or *people*.

These nomadic tribes of the Soviet North, gradually pushed out of the more livable regions to the south by stronger and more warlike peoples, have wandered for centuries over the vast taiga and tundra zones, hunting, fishing, and breeding reindeer. Those in the reindeer country follow their herds northward in summer to the fine grazing moss of the open tundra and southward with the coming of fall into the forest belt. The Arctic natives utilize their reindeer not only for food and milk, but as draft animals. And in this frigid land of ice and snow, sleighs or sleds drawn by reindeer are a common sight.

All the northern peoples of Siberia were in an extremely backward and undeveloped state in 1917. Besides being subject to constant poverty and disease, they were of course mercilessly exploited by the Russians who came in contact with them. They were also prey to the most primitive superstitions, being predominantly polytheistic nature-worshippers or devotees of Shamanism, a pagan faith of sorcery and magic. The shaman (priest) is essentially a witch doctor or medicine man who carries on wild dance and drum rituals and goes into a frenzy or fit of hysteria while calling up spirits from the dead. This Siberian Shamanism is quite similar to the typical religion of the American Indian.

I remember a story by Joseph Barnes, at one time Moscow correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune*, that well illustrates the ancient folkways current until recently among natives of the Soviet North. He told about some people in the vicinity of the Urals whose chief deity was a great elm in the middle of their village. This god-tree had such standing among the villagers that when a unit of the Communist Party was organized there, it felt called upon to elect the elm as an honorary member!

The full story of the development of the northern peoples and

regions of the U.S.S.R. is one of the most thrilling and remarkable in the entire Soviet repertoire. The Soviet Government has done everything possible to raise the standard of living and culture among these tribes, many of which were rapidly declining in population. In Leningrad it set up a special Institute of the Peoples of the North, referred to by the natives as the "Tent of Miracles," to study their problems and to train the most promising students from the Arctic districts for positions of leadership. At the same time it worked out written alphabets for these groups and established numerous schools and cultural bases in the different National Districts. A cultural base is a small model town containing health clinics, bathhouses, educational institutions, shops, and so on.

According to the Soviet authority, Nicholas Mikhailov, "when a hunter or a reindeer breeder arrives at the cultural base, he is provided with food and a bed. He is taken to the museum showing the natural resources and economy of his region. He is shown the workshops, and if necessary his gun, sledge, or clothing is repaired. He learns how to look after the animals in a nursery, how to skin the animal and how to cure the skin, how to stock fish and how to treat sick reindeer. A physician examines the hunter in a clinic and gives him medication if he requires it. The new arrival goes to a bath, visits the cinema, and listens to the radio."¹³

The Soviets have taken seriously the implications of the phrase "The Friendly Arctic," used by the famous polar explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, as the title of a book. Thus they have introduced agriculture to these sub-zero climes and have succeeded in making many sorts of vegetables grow, both inside and outside hothouses, north of the Arctic Circle. The long winter night, lit up frequently by the magnificent aurora borealis, lasts seven or eight months. But during the brief summers the vast amount of extra light in this land of the midnight sun helps to offset the lack of sun heat. Dairy farming, too, now proceeds apace in these northern latitudes. And even certain

varieties of wheat, developed by scientific horticulture to withstand cold and ripen quickly, are growing today within a short distance of the polar circle.

Of great significance for all the northern peoples has been the establishment of the Northern Sea Route through the ice-strewn waters of the Arctic from Murmansk in the west to Bering Strait and Vladivostok in the east. This "seaway across the top of the world" is already in a sense Soviet Russia's Panama Canal between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and well served the purposes of war strategy in the struggle against the Nazis. While this polar route of some 5,000 miles is navigable only three months of the year, it has played a major role in opening up the Arctic territories of Soviet Siberia for commerce, scientific investigation, and the development of natural resources. A network of scientific stations, more than sixty in number, is now functioning in this region. And merchant ships, often escorted by powerful icebreakers, bring modern industrial products to ports near the mouths of the great rivers whence these goods are distributed to the indigenous tribes.

I shall not attempt to cover the individual peoples of the North in any detail, but shall merely mention a few points of special interest about them. The largest National District of all is the Ostiak-Vogul, inhabited chiefly by Khantes (Ostiaks) and Mansis (Voguls). Through this N.D., which is almost as big as the whole Scandinavian Peninsula, sweeps the broad Ob, historic river mentioned in Milton's *Paradise Lost* as one of the places near which Satan sought to hide after his banishment from heaven. Farthest north of the National Districts is the Taimyr, entirely above the Arctic Circle and inhabited mainly by Dolgans and Nentsi. In this District are substantial deposits of nickel, copper, platinum, gold, and oil. Capital of the Taimyr N.D. is Dudinka on the lower reaches of the Yenisei, meaning "Great River" in the native tongue, 2,700 miles in length and the central north-south thoroughfare of Siberia.

On the Taimyr Peninsula 500 miles beyond the Arctic Circle

live the small tribe of Nganasans, the most northerly people of the U.S.S.R. Up till the time of the Revolution the Nganasans were still grouped in clans and relied upon homemade bows and arrows in hunting. They excel in the art of carving objects from mammoth tusks and have a rich oral folklore recently put into written form by ethnographic experts sent out to the peninsula in an expedition organized under the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

South of the Taimyr N.D. is the Evenki National District, another large area and almost the size of the whole Ukrainian Republic. Most numerous of the northern tribes and aggregating about 40,000, the Evenkis have been called the "Frenchmen of Siberia," on account of their pronounced artistic gifts. But these "Frenchmen" still make use of birchbark wigwams and resemble the American Indian in physical appearance and living habits. Just west of the Evenki border and above the Arctic Circle lies Kureika, a tiny hamlet of fourteen houses where Joseph Stalin was exiled for three years, from 1914 through 1916, and where he learned at firsthand about the Siberian natives.

The Evenki District extends eastward to the Yakut A.S.S.R. beyond which is the Chukot N.D., a National District of the Far North that is also part of the Far East. In this Chukot territory, reaching to Bering Strait, dwell the Chukchis, meaning "rich in reindeer," and recently renamed the Luoravetlans. This small tribe of less than 15,000 is unquestionably akin to the Indian of North America. The Chukot N.D. includes Big Diomedé Island, which, situated in the middle of the Strait, is only three and a half miles away from Little Diomedé, owned by the United States Territory of Alaska. This narrow bit of water, frozen solid throughout the winter, marks the American-Soviet frontier as well as the boundary line between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Here, also, today and tomorrow meet and merge. For the International Date Line runs between the two Diomedes, so that when it is Sunday on the American island, it is Monday on the Soviet.

Dr. Ruth Gruber, expert on the Soviet Arctic, tells us that "the islanders are Eskimos. They speak the same language, attend each other's movies and dances, intermarry. . . . The two islands are tiny, treeless, hard rocks, almost level on top, as though a giant flatiron had pressed them out. . . . In the summer all transportation is by skin boats, equipped for the most part with outboard motors. These native *kayaks* and *umiaks*, patterned by use from ancient models, navigate the Arctic better and can be pulled up on shore more easily than any modern craft we have introduced. Winter ice, which comes early and stays late, links the two islands like a paved road. Children play on the ice, hunters go out to shoot seals, and Eskimos of two worlds exchange gossip as they sip tea, trade skins, and carve bracelets and necklaces from walrus ivory."¹⁴

The inland Chukchis breed reindeer and hunt wolves, bears, and foxes. Those of the maritime region along the Bering Sea are mainly seal hunters, but also catch walrus, from whose skins they make boats, and occasionally capture even whales. Not so long ago the Chukchis practiced a religion which held that only those dying a violent death would go on to a future life. This curious though convenient belief elevated into an act of piety the killing off of the aged and infirm, a custom known as *kamitok*. The remote mainland of the Chukot National District was in 1933 the scene of a forced landing by the American pilot, James Mattern, on his way from Siberia to Alaska during his attempted round-the-world flight.

South of the Chukot N.D. is the National District of the Koriaks, recently renamed the Nymylans. They are closely related to the Chukchis, frequently intermarry with them and make their living in much the same ways. The Koriak capital is Palana on the lengthy Kamchatka Peninsula, with its lofty mountains and active volcanoes, hot springs and oil fields. When it is noon in Leningrad it is 10 P.M. on Kamchatka. The Koriaks, Kamchadals and other indigenous peoples of this region are all great fishermen, now organized into collectives using modern

methods worked out by the Pacific Institute of Fisheries. In her book *North to the Orient*, Mrs. Anne Lindbergh has a sympathetic chapter on Kamchatka, where she and her husband were warmly received in 1931 when they stopped for the night on their long flight to Japan.

The Chukot, Koriak, and Kamchatka areas have all become important in air communications between America and the Far East, for the Great Circle Route goes over or close to these Soviet territories. It is 4,500 miles nearer to Tokyo from New York by this northern course than by flying straight across the Pacific Ocean. The route from Alaska over Bering Strait or Bering Sea is also the best approach by air to the Soviet Union from the Pacific side. And thousands of American Lend-Lease planes for the Soviet war against the Nazis flew this way between 1942 and 1945.

There are altogether some eighty peoples in the Soviet Far East. And in Moscow for many years a Far Eastern Institute has been busy studying the origin, customs, and languages of these Siberian natives. I shall mention, however, only a few more of these groups. Of special interest to Americans are the Aleuts, reduced by 1917 to a scanty 300, and living on the bleak, inclement Komandorskie Islands, famous for fog, seals, and sea otters. The Aleuts, also known as Unangans, are a branch of the Eskimo family, like their Alaskan cousins on the Aleutian Islands 250 miles away. Their hand-to-mouth mode of living has been drastically altered during the past two decades and they are now a prosperous and self-respecting minority.

Inland on the continent is a small group in northeastern Yakutia that should not be overlooked. These are the Oduls (Yukagirs) in the vicinity of the Kolyma River, upon the upper reaches of which are extensive gold deposits. Of this tribe it was once said that the "smoke of the Oduls' bonfires hid the twinkling of the stars." But through constant poverty and famine, which at times made them resort to larchwood for food,

they became a dying people. And only 500 of them were left when the Tsarist regime was finally overthrown.

Much further south, in the coastal region of the Lower Amur River, live the Nivkhi (Giliaks). Until recently they hunted with bow and arrow and dwelt in mud huts filled with the stench of the hanging *yookola*, that is, sun-dried fish. A number of the Nivkhi inhabit the northern half of Sakhalin Island which they reached by driving their dog sledges across the solid winter ice of the Strait of Tatar. Sakhalin was one of the very worst penal colonies under the Tsars—a veritable “Devil’s Island” that was described in all its horror in a book by the dramatist Chekhov. Now northern Sakhalin is a flourishing part of the new Soviet system. The change is symbolized in the name of one of the leading Nivkhi collective farms, called “New Life.” Northern Sakhalin has been vital in the economic development of the Soviet Far East on account of its rich deposits of coal and especially oil.

Returning to the mainland, we find in the low mountains of the Maritime Territory, partly opposite Sakhalin, the Orochons, meaning “deer-breeders.” Reduced like the Oduls to a mere handful, they have been quickly evolving out of their half-savage customs. Ten years ago Nicholas Sidorov, a Russian schoolteacher, and his wife took up residence among the 600 Orochons and have been instructing them since then in the ways of modern culture. The first wooden building ever constructed in the territory of the Orochons was a school. The Sidorovs had to teach this people the most elementary practices, such as the use of soap, towels, beds, knives, forks, pens, and pencils. The Orochon children were at first terribly afraid of cows, though unafraid of all sorts of wild animals. The Soviet Government recently awarded Sidorov the Order of Lenin for his untiring work on behalf of a backward tribe. He and his wife are typical of the many socialist missionaries who have gone to wild and out-of-the-way places in the Soviet Union to help bring the light of civilization to formerly isolated nationalities.

In the southernmost section of the Soviet Far East, mostly in the long tongue of land with Vladivostok at its tip, there are close to 200,000 Koreans, refugees from a homeland annexed by the Japanese war-lords in 1910 and harshly ruled by them until 1945. In this same general vicinity, too, are about 30,000 Chinese who have seeped over the frontier. These Koreans and Chinese together have more than 300 schools in their own languages as well as newspapers and theaters. Then there are the approximately 50,000 Jews comprising a compact little minority in the Jewish Autonomous Region whose southern border is the Amur River and Manchuria. I have already told the story of this area and of the Soviet Jews in general in Chapter III.

Following Soviet participation in the United Nations victory over Japan in 1945, the U.S.S.R. acquired two new minorities, Ainu and Japanese, when it took over from Japan southern Sakhalin Island and the Kurile Islands. As early as the 1700's both Russians and Japanese had penetrated into Sakhalin and the Kuriles. In 1875 the Tsarist Government agreed to withdraw entirely from the Kuriles in return for the Japanese relinquishing all claims to Sakhalin. The Tsarist Russians, however, were compelled to cede the southern half of Sakhalin to Japan after their decisive defeat in the war of 1904-05.

Soviet annexation of southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands gives the U.S.S.R. and the Russian Republic for the first time unobstructed access to the Pacific Ocean and greatly improves the Soviet defensive position in the Far East. The Kurile chain consists of forty-seven small, fog-smothered islands stretching for more than 700 miles along the eastern fringe of the icy Sea of Okhotsk and to within eight miles of Japan. They possess valuable fishing grounds and fur-bearing animals. The name of the Kurile group derives from the Russian verb *to smoke* and alludes to the active volcanic character of the islands.

Southern Sakhalin, which the Japanese called by its old Ainu name of Karafuto, has extensive resources in coal and oil, timber and fisheries. In 1945 it contained about 400,000 Japanese, but

many of these will in all likelihood soon be repatriated to Japan. There are also some 1,000 Ainu in southern Sakhalin. The Ainu were once a numerous people who long ago occupied most of Japan proper. But they were driven out, annihilated, or absorbed by the Japanese, so that today no more than 20,000 remain altogether. A few hundred Ainu live in the Kurile Islands.

The Ainu people are a relic of a very ancient ethnic stock and are thought by some anthropologists to be an isolated fragment of the Caucasian or white race. It is generally agreed that in certain important characteristics they resemble the white race more than they do the Mongoloid Japanese. The Ainu are definitely a primitive type with a culture that is to some extent reminiscent of stone age man. Their religion is animistic and makes much of the familiar cult of the bear with its elaborate ritual.

In August, 1945, the Soviet Union made a treaty of alliance and friendship with the Chinese Republic. This far-reaching pact established for a period of thirty years joint Soviet and Chinese administration of the Manchurian railways, joint utilization of Port Arthur as a naval base, and special commercial rights in Dairen, which was proclaimed a free port. Since under this agreement Soviet officials and personnel will be in close and constant contact with the Chinese, we can expect that these Soviet citizens will display their country's spirit of ethnic democracy, as contrasted with the haughty and hostile attitude toward the Chinese of, for instance, the Tsarist Russians and the Japanese.

Concluding this chapter on the peoples of Soviet Asia, I believe it is fair to say that the Soviet minorities policy has succeeded to an eminent degree within the U.S.S.R. in overcoming the age-long antagonisms and misunderstandings between the East and the West. To nationalities as backward in their economy, culture, and democratic development as many of those in the present colonial and semi-colonial regions of the

earth, the Soviets have brought modernized industry and agriculture, educational and cultural enlightenment, and full ethnic, or racial, democracy. This bridging of the gap between some of the important peoples of Europe and of Asia is fraught with vast significance for the rest of the world.

CHAPTER V

THE SOVIET MINORITIES POLICY

Contrasts with Tsarist Policy

THE OLD Russian Empire contained all of the same peoples who live today in the Soviet Union, though until 1917 the minority of Finns and Poles was far larger due to the fact that the Tsarist boundaries included the whole of Finland and most of western Poland. Tsarist policy toward racial and national minorities was the exact antithesis of Soviet policy. The Russian monarchy functioned frankly under the twin slogans of "One Tsar, one religion, one language" and "Autocracy, orthodoxy, nationalism." For the minority groups in general this meant political oppression, economic exploitation, and enforced Russification.

The Tsarist administration filled almost all official positions in the minority regions with Great Russians and made every effort to suppress and destroy the cultures and languages of the non-Russian peoples. The Russian language was the sole medium of the courts, the government schools, and official business. The imperial government severely discouraged and frequently forbade the use of the native tongues. "A Kalmyk boy caught speaking his own dialect in class or school had to wear round his neck the sign, 'It is forbidden to speak Kalmyk,' and go without dinner."

The policy of Russification bore down heavily even on highly developed Slav peoples such as the Ukrainians, the Byelo-Russians, and the Poles. One of Tsar Nicholas I's ministers categorically affirmed: "There never was, there is not now, and there

never can be a separate Ukrainian language. It is Russian corrupted by Polish." There was, however, some relaxation of the ruthless drive for Russification in Finland, which always maintained a certain degree of autonomy, in the Baltic states for the purpose of counteracting German influence, and in the Moslem areas for the purpose of counteracting Turkish influence as well as avoiding trouble with the Mohammedan religion. Also, the non-Russian peoples were able to obtain breathing spells from Russian despotism through the sheer inefficiency of Tsarist officials and their well-known willingness to look the other way when their palms were properly greased.

The stifling of minority cultures fitted in well with Tsarist policy in regard to the education of the non-Russian populations. Thus, in a confidential report to Emperor Nicholas I, the chief of the Fifth Gendarmerie Corps gave his opinion concerning the Chuvash of the upper Volga River. "Experience of all times," he wrote, "proves that it is easier to rule an ignorant people than a people that has received even the slightest degree of education. . . . In accordance with this precept the authorities over the Chuvash people are exerting every effort to keep them in ignorance."¹

The Tsarist Government officially termed many of the minorities, including the Jews and the inhabitants of Russian Asia, *Inorodtsi*, meaning "aliens by origin." The ruling circles of the Great Russians despised the subject peoples and these peoples hated them in return with bitterness and intensity. The situation in regard to the Kazakhs may be taken as quite typical. As one Tsarist official put it: "There is no other way to manage the Kazakhs except through massacres." The Kazakhs, on the other hand, had a well-known proverb: "If a Russian travel with you, hold an ax in readiness."

Indicative of the mutual distrust between the Tsarist regime and the minorities was the fact, mentioned by Soviet Foreign Commissar Molotov in a recent address, that in the old Russia "certain nationalities and peoples were not conscripted for mili-

tary service. For instance, the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tadzhiks, Turkmenians, Kirgizians, and most of the peoples of the northern Caucasus were not subject to conscription. Tsarism, naturally, did not trust peoples which it kept in a colonial or semi-colonial status. The Tsarist power even did not do anything to prepare these peoples for gradual induction into the army. In the Soviet time the situation has changed radically.”² As we saw earlier, the labor conscription act that the Tsarist Government tried to introduce into Central Asia in 1916 resulted in a widespread rebellion on the part of the native peoples.

In the economic sphere the Tsarist authorities consciously held back the development of the minorities in order better to exploit their labor and raw materials, to forestall the rise of a troublesome proletariat, and to guard Great Russian industry against competition. The autocracy in some cases even imposed tariffs on finished goods coming to western Russia from outlying parts of the Empire. In short, the old regime treated vanquished nations under its rule as regular colonies. But these colonies, unlike those of other empires, were geographically contiguous to the realm of the conqueror instead of far away across the seas.

The backward and unimaginative Tsarist administration did not even possess the intelligence to uncover and develop, in its own self-interest, the vast mineral and other wealth that existed in the lands of the minority peoples. Here is a typical statement by a Tsarist official of the old days: “Agriculture and civilized life are impossible in the Russian North. A hen and a cock could not find enough food for themselves in the Arctic. What would people do? We cannot change the northern climate.” It is significant to compare this defeatist attitude with that taken by the Soviet authorities in regard to the North.

The Tsars followed the long-established imperialist strategy of “divide and rule,” stirring up interracial animosities wherever possible. Tsarist administrators became experts in fostering ancient prejudices and in inventing new ones; in arousing in-

ternal antagonisms by advancing one ethnic group to a position of economic or political privilege in respect to other groups in the same region. The result was continued bitterness and bloodshed between the Armenians and the Georgians, the Poles and the Ukrainians, the Uzbeks and the Tadzhiks, the Great Russians and everyone else. Most carefully planned, most savage of all, were the campaigns of hate against the Jews, often culminating in the pogroms I have already described.

Since many of the non-Russian groups adhered to non-Orthodox faiths, it is pertinent to consider some of the differences between Tsarist and Soviet policy regarding religion. Here it is of paramount importance to recall that in the old Russia the Russian Orthodox Church was not only by far the largest religious body, but in addition the official state church of which the Tsar himself was head. And this Russian Orthodox Church was extremely intolerant of the minority religions, being just as hostile toward them as was the Tsarist Government toward minority peoples. Though the Orthodox authorities made concessions now and then, especially toward the eastern sects, their basic intent was to win all inhabitants of the Empire to the Orthodox creed and eventually to eliminate the other religions.

While the Soviets in their official philosophy are anti-religious, they have guaranteed freedom of religious worship in the Constitution and put all religions in the U.S.S.R. on an equal basis. These steps have helped in the actualization of the Soviet minorities policy, particularly when a specific religion is closely bound up with a definite ethnic group. Throughout its administration the Soviet Government has taken care not to offend unnecessarily the religious sensibilities of the different peoples, though it has had to be firm when socialist policy clashed with religious custom as in the field of education and in the public ownership of former church properties.

We can sum up the contrast between Tsarist and Soviet policy toward nationalities very simply by saying that when the Soviet Government assumed power in 1917, it completely re-

versed the Tsarist attitude toward ethnic minorities within the country. Typical of the drastic change in viewpoint was the statement by Stalin on the Jewish question in 1931. At that time he said: "National and racial chauvinism is a remnant of man-hating customs characteristic of the era of cannibalism. Anti-Semitism is an extreme expression of racial chauvinism and as such is the most dangerous survival of cannibalism. It is useful to the exploiter for it serves as a lightning rod enabling capitalism to evade the blows of the toilers. . . . In the U.S.S.R. anti-Semitism is prosecuted most severely as a phenomenon profoundly inimical to the Soviet system."³

Since the establishment of the Soviet Republic, the many different ethnic groups and nationalities in the U.S.S.R. have experienced a tremendous release of energies that has led to a veritable renaissance in their ways of life. As Lahuti, a leading Tadzhik poet from faraway Central Asia, told Stalin a few years ago: "You have resurrected peoples from the dead, peoples who were less than dust. . . . Now these peoples have conquered the earth and have come to report their victory."⁴

Lahuti was speaking on behalf of a special delegation of record-breaking cottongrowers from Tadzhikistan who had journeyed all the way to Moscow to bring news of the unprecedented progress in their Republic. Arith Shakirov, one of the cottongrowers, also spoke. "The past was a stairway of years carpeted with pain," he said. "The Uzbeks feared to go along the street of the Arabs; the Tadzhiks carried sticks when they walked through the Uzbek quarter. Hardly anyone could read. That past is gone. On its ruins we build a bright new life. Woe unto anyone who tries to take it away from us."⁵

Constitutional Provisions and Political Rights

The sweeping provision that legally guarantees ethnic democracy throughout the Soviet Union is embodied in Article 123 of the 1936 Constitution and reads as follows: "Equality of

rights of citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life, is an indefeasible law. Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, any establishment of direct or indirect privileges for, citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law." This statement is patterned after an earlier one appearing in the Russian Republic's Constitution of 1918.

The Criminal Code of the Russian Republic provides that: "Propaganda or agitation directed at the incitement of national or religious enmity or discord, and also the circulation or preparation and storing of literature of such character is punishable by deprivation of freedom for a period of up to two years. Such actions occurring during wartime conditions or during a period of general unrest" may be punishable by longer terms of imprisonment and, if the offense warrants it, even death. In the other Union Republics the Criminal Codes, for which the Russian S.F.S.R. Code is the prototype, have similar provisions. A uniform, All-Union Criminal Code has not yet been drawn up.

The Soviet policy on minorities is a major motif running all through the 1936 Constitution and the country's political organization. Articles 30-39 establish the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. as the highest legislative body in the nation and set up two Chambers possessing equal rights. One is the Soviet of the Union, consisting of about 670 deputies elected on the purely numerical basis of one representative for every 300,000 of the population. The other is the Soviet of Nationalities and normally consists of 664 deputies elected on the basis of twenty-five from each Union Republic, eleven from each Autonomous Republic, five from each Autonomous Region and one from each National District.

The Supreme Soviet is chosen for a term of four years in direct elections by "all citizens of the U.S.S.R. who have reached the age of eighteen." At a joint sitting of both Chambers it

elects a Presidium or Executive Committee to act when it is not in session. Each of the sixteen Vice-Presidents of this Presidium comes from a different Union Republic.

In the 1924 Constitution the Soviet of Nationalities was a much smaller body than now, having five representatives from each Union and Autonomous Republic and one representative from each Autonomous Region. In this earlier document there was no provision for National Districts, since none of them was formed until 1925.

Under the political setup just described, all of the main national groups organized in territories of their own have adequate representation in the central Soviet Congress. The Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, with a population of about 1,350,000, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, with a population of about 42,000,000, and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, with a population of about 114,000,000, all elect the same number of delegates to the Soviet of Nationalities. The far eastern Yakut Autonomous Republic, with about 400,000 people, sends the same number as the Tatar Autonomous Republic, with over 3,000,000 people. And each of the National Districts, with populations ranging from around 10,000 to 200,000, gets a voice in the Supreme Soviet with one representative.

Furthermore, the deputies elected to the Soviet of the Union on a numerical basis from all over the country of course themselves come from one national division or other. As Stalin said in his discussion of the 1936 Constitution, the Soviet of the Union represents "the *common* interests of all the working people of the U.S.S.R. irrespective of nationality. . . . But in addition to common interests, the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. have *their particular, specific* interests, connected with their specific national characteristics." ⁶ And the Soviet of Nationalities takes care of such interests.

It is only in a very limited sense that the Soviet of Nationalities can be said to correspond with the United States Senate and the Soviet of the Union with our House of Representatives. For

Stalin made clear that in his opinion "a single-chamber system would be better than a dual-chamber system if the U.S.S.R. were a single-nation state. But the U.S.S.R. is not a single-nation state. The U.S.S.R., as we know, is a multinational state."⁷ And he went on to make some trenchant criticisms of dual-chamber systems in Europe and America.

The first All-Union elections to the Soviet of Nationalities under the new Constitution took place in December, 1937, but those scheduled for 1941 were canceled owing to the Nazi invasion.* In the elections of 1937, when only eleven Union Republics were in existence, representatives of fifty-nine different peoples were chosen for the Soviet of Nationalities. In this body the number of deputies, according to the leading nationalities, was as follows:

NATIONAL COMPOSITION OF THE SOVIET OF NATIONALITIES⁸

Russians.....	141	Kalmyks.....	9
Ukrainians.....	36	Ossetians.....	9
Georgians.....	34	Komi.....	9
Azerbaijanians.....	33	Buriat-Mongols.....	8
Armenians.....	30	Udmurts.....	7
Uzbeks.....	28	Yakuts.....	7
Kazakhs.....	24	Mari.....	6
Kirgiz.....	17	Abkhazians.....	6
Tatars.....	16	Kara-Kalpaks.....	6
Turkmenians.....	15	Bashkirs.....	5
Byelo-Russians.....	15	Chechens.....	5
Jews.....	15	Mordovians.....	5
Tadzhiks.....	14	Moldavians.....	5
Germans.....	10	Karelians.....	5

At first glance it may seem surprising that in the Soviet of Nationalities there were as many as 141 Russians, or almost 25 per cent, out of the then 574 deputies. This situation is understandable, however, if we recall the widespread diffusion of Russians throughout the Soviet Union and the fact that considerable numbers of them live in almost every national division.

* New elections to the Supreme Soviet were scheduled for Feb., 1946.

Other major nationalities also overflow their own national divisions, which is why in the above table the Ukrainians, the Georgians, the Azerbaidzhanians, the Armenians, and the Uzbeks all have more than the twenty-five deputies allotted to the respective Union Republics bearing their names. On the other hand, the Kazakhs, the Kirgiz, the Turkmenians, the Byelorussians, and the Tadzhiks are under their official twenty-five.

For the same reasons most of the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics, whose non-Russian peoples are named in the second column, did not elect their quota of eleven deputies from these particular nationalities alone. The Mari Republic, for example, probably chose five Russians in addition to the six Mari for the Soviet of Nationalities. This is what we might expect from looking at our Chart of Nationalities and finding that the latest available figure on national origins in this territory is Mari, 51.4 per cent, and Russian, 43.6 per cent. It is also significant to note that fifteen Jews were selected in the 1937 elections, ten more than the official five deputies allotted to the Jewish Autonomous Region. We cannot be sure that all five representatives from the Jewish A.R. were Jews, but at any rate at least ten Jews living in other national divisions were chosen for the Soviet of Nationalities.

All of the fifty-four national territories of the U.S.S.R. have control over purely local affairs in general, but they must conform in all ways to the socialist principles enunciated in the Soviet Constitution. Naturally the Union Republics possess greater powers than the various ethnic subdivisions within them. Article 14 of the Constitution enumerates twenty-three matters over which the central Soviet Government has jurisdiction. Then Article 15 states: "The sovereignty of the Union Republics is limited only within the provisions set forth in Article 14 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. Outside of these provisions, each Union Republic exercises state authority independently. The U.S.S.R. protects the sovereign rights of the Union Republics."

Article 17 of the Constitution goes so far as to grant every Union Republic "the right freely to secede from the U.S.S.R." Some observers are skeptical as to whether in practice any Union Republic would be able to secede. But Soviet authorities regard the right of secession very seriously. Thus Stalin himself spoke against a proposed amendment to do away with this right. Among other things, he stated that only Autonomous Republics on the borders of Soviet Russia could become Union Republics, one of the main reasons being:

"Since the Union Republics have the right to secede from the U.S.S.R., a republic, on becoming a Union Republic, must be in a position logically and actually to raise the question of secession from the U.S.S.R. And this question can be raised only by a republic which, say, borders on some foreign state, and, consequently, is not surrounded on all sides by U.S.S.R. territory. Of course, none of our republics would actually raise the question of seceding from the U.S.S.R. But since the right to secede from the U.S.S.R. is reserved to the Union Republics, it must be so arranged that this right does not become a meaningless scrap of paper."⁹

Important amendments made by the Supreme Soviet to the 1936 Constitution in February, 1944, give to all Union Republics "the right to enter into direct relations with foreign states, to conclude agreements with them and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives with them"; and the right to have their own "republican military formations" as component parts of the Red Army. These amendments were a wholly logical development of Soviet policy toward the many racial and national minorities of the U.S.S.R. And they showed that the friendship and co-operation among the different peoples of the Soviet Union had become tempered still further in the terrific crucible of war. The Nazi invasion and its enormous pressures, instead of leading, as Hitler anticipated, to antagonism and discord among the Soviet nationalities, in general strengthened their mutual understanding and confidence.

The first Union Republics to set up their own Commissariats of Foreign Affairs were those of the Ukraine and Byelo-Russia. And at the San Francisco Conference in the spring of 1945, the representatives of the United Nations voted to admit the Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian Republics as participants in the Conference and as initial members of the General Assembly of the new international organization to preserve world peace. Thus the Soviet Union as a whole, the Ukrainian S.S.R., and the Byelo-Russian S.S.R. each has a vote in the Assembly, as distinct from the Security Council where the chief and ultimate power lies.

In appealing for separate representation for the Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian Republics, Soviet spokesmen stressed the great contribution and sacrifice that these two nations had made in the war against Nazi Germany and their direct involvement all the way through. In spite of this special point, however, the other fourteen Union Republics of the U.S.S.R. may well eventually seek individual membership in the United Nations Organization (UNO). And that they will do so was in fact the opinion expressed in a press interview in May, 1945, by Dmitri Z. Manuïlski, Foreign Secretary of the Ukrainian Republic and chairman of the Ukrainian delegation to the San Francisco Conference.

The Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Mr. V. M. Molotov, in his 1944 report to the Supreme Soviet on the new amendments, stated: "This transformation signifies great expansion of the Union Republics which has become possible as a result of their political, economic, and cultural growth, or in other words, as a result of their national development. . . . The Union Republics have quite a few specific economic and cultural requirements which cannot be covered in full measure by all-Union representation abroad and also by treaties and agreements of the Union with other states. These national requirements of the republics can be met better by means of direct relations of the republics with corresponding states. . . . This step of the Soviet

power will constitute a new moral and political blow at Fascism and its man-hating policy, hostile to its core to the interests of the free national development of peoples.”¹⁰

Nonetheless, influential sections of the foreign press interpreted the constitutional amendments as a sinister plot on the part of the Soviet Union to communize Europe or to get sixteen extra votes at the peace conference, one for each Union Republic. And commentators who had been critical of the U.S.S.R. for what they considered lack of democracy and overcentralization seemed blind to the fact that the amendments constituted a significant step toward democratic functioning and administrative decentralization. At the same time such critics greatly overstressed the degree of actual autonomy that the Union Republics achieved through these constitutional changes.

For the federal Soviet state still retains far-reaching controls over the entire U.S.S.R. and all the national divisions within the country. The new amendments specifically provide that the federal state shall establish “the general character of the relations between the Union Republic and foreign states” and “the guiding principles of the organization of the military formations of the Union Republics.” In other words, the Union Republics must carry on their foreign relations and organize their military formations according to a general pattern laid down by the central Soviet Government. This Government, after all, has the responsibility of representing the Soviet Union as a whole in international relations, of directing the defense of the nation, and of co-ordinating all units of the armed forces under the single command of the Red Army.

This does not mean, however, that the new powers of the Union Republics are not real or significant. For the system of government in the U.S.S.R. has all along been organized on the basis of the central administration having the right of over-all co-ordination in respect to a good many political and economic activities carried on within the Union Republics and their national subdivisions. There is nothing exceptional in this. For

a federal commonwealth, whether it be the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or the United States of America, is bound to operate in some such manner.

But in the Soviet Union an additional factor exists in bringing about national unity, from both a political and an administrative standpoint, that is not to be found in any other country. This is the powerful Communist Party, the only political party in the land and an organization whose far-reaching influence extends to every nook and cranny of the U.S.S.R. The Communist Party, consisting of about 5,700,000 carefully chosen members, is active and well organized in every Union Republic and other national division.

In the Soviet of Nationalities, as well as in the legislative bodies and governments of the various national divisions, a high proportion of the members will ordinarily belong to the Communist Party. For instance, in the 1937 elections to the Soviet of Nationalities 71 per cent of those chosen in the balloting were Communists. On the other hand, the different nationalities are well represented in the Communist Party Congresses, in the Party's Central Committee and in the inner Political Bureau (Politbureau) elected by that Committee. Thus without any question the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. acts as a most potent force in welding all the ethnic groups of the Soviet Union into a vast and remarkably harmonious whole.

The governmental structures of the Union and Autonomous Republics are designed after the federal state, with the important exception that their Supreme Soviets are unicameral instead of bicameral. This means, of course, that they do not have a separate Chamber of Nationalities. Thus the Autonomous Republics, the Autonomous Regions, and the National Districts are represented *as national units* only in the Soviet of Nationalities. Elections to the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics are on the basis of one delegate for every 150,000 in-

habitants; to the Supreme Soviets of the Autonomous Republics, on the basis of one delegate for every 3,000 to 20,000.

Each Union and Autonomous Republic has its own constitution, "which takes account of the specific features" of the particular republic and is drawn up in general conformity with the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. The Supreme Soviet of each republic elects a Presidium, equivalent to an Executive Committee, to function when it is not sitting and appoints a Council of People's Commissars or cabinet. This Council is actually the day-to-day government of the republic and its highest executive and administrative organ. The Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars is premier of the republic in question. The members of the Council of People's Commissars are for the most part commissars who are heads of some important branch of state affairs.

On the administrative level the division of powers between the central Soviet Government and the Union Republics is recognized in the first instance through the establishment of two separate classes of federal Commissariats. First, there are the more than twenty-five All-Union People's Commissariats which (Article 75) "direct the branches of state administration entrusted to them throughout the territory of the U.S.S.R. either directly or through bodies appointed by them." These are Commissariats, functioning on behalf of the country as a whole, such as (Article 77) those of Foreign Trade, Railways, River Transport, the Coal Industry, the Oil Industry, Power Stations, Armaments and Heavy Machine-Building. These All-Union Commissariats maintain their chief offices in Moscow and have branch offices in the capitals of each Union Republic and other important cities.

Second, there are the more than fifteen Union-Republican People's Commissariats which (Article 76) "direct the branches of state administration entrusted to them through the corresponding People's Commissariats of the Union Republics." In other words, each of these Union-Republican Commissariats

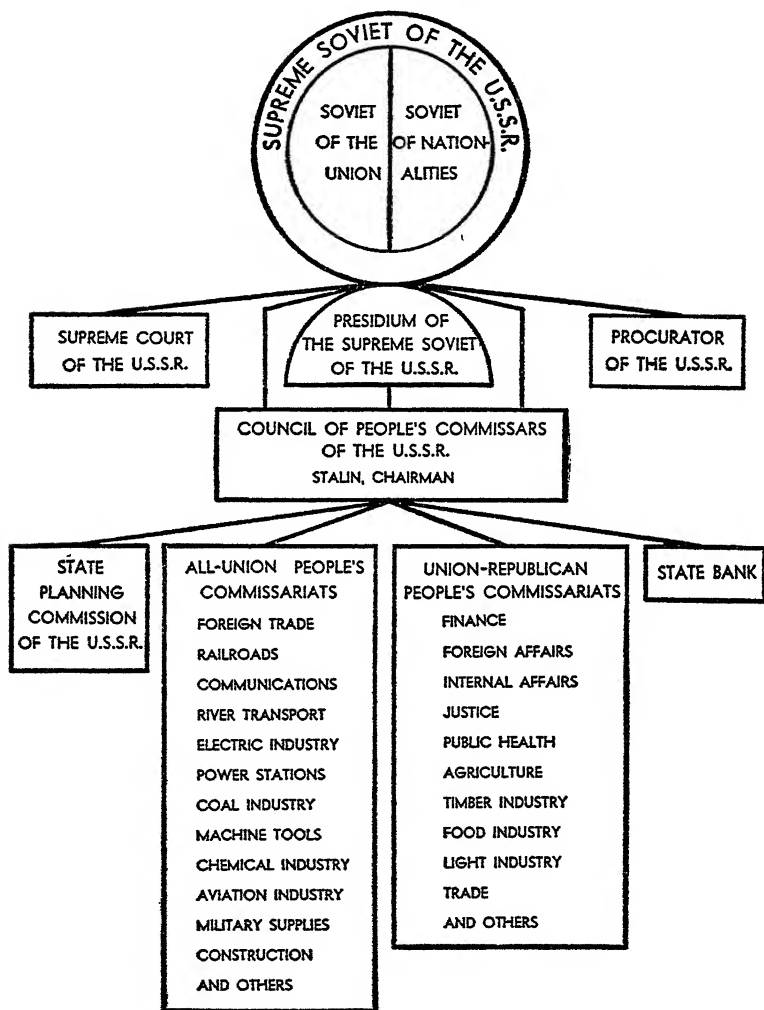
collaborates closely with a corresponding Union-Republican Commissariat in each Union Republic. Union-Republican Commissariats include (Article 78) those of the Food Industry, Light Industry, Agriculture, Finance, Justice, and Public Health. Under the constitutional amendments of 1944, the two formerly All-Union Commissariats of Defense and Foreign Affairs were converted into Union-Republican Commissariats.

The Union-Republican Commissariats of each Republic have a dual responsibility, being (Article 87) "subordinate both to the Council of People's Commissars of the Union Republic and to the corresponding Union-Republican People's Commissariats of the U.S.S.R." The Union Republics also administer a few Republican People's Commissariats that do not have any opposite number in the federal government. These are the Commissariats of Automobile Transport, Education, Local Industry, Municipal Economy, and Social Maintenance. These Commissariats are responsible to the government of the Union Republic alone.

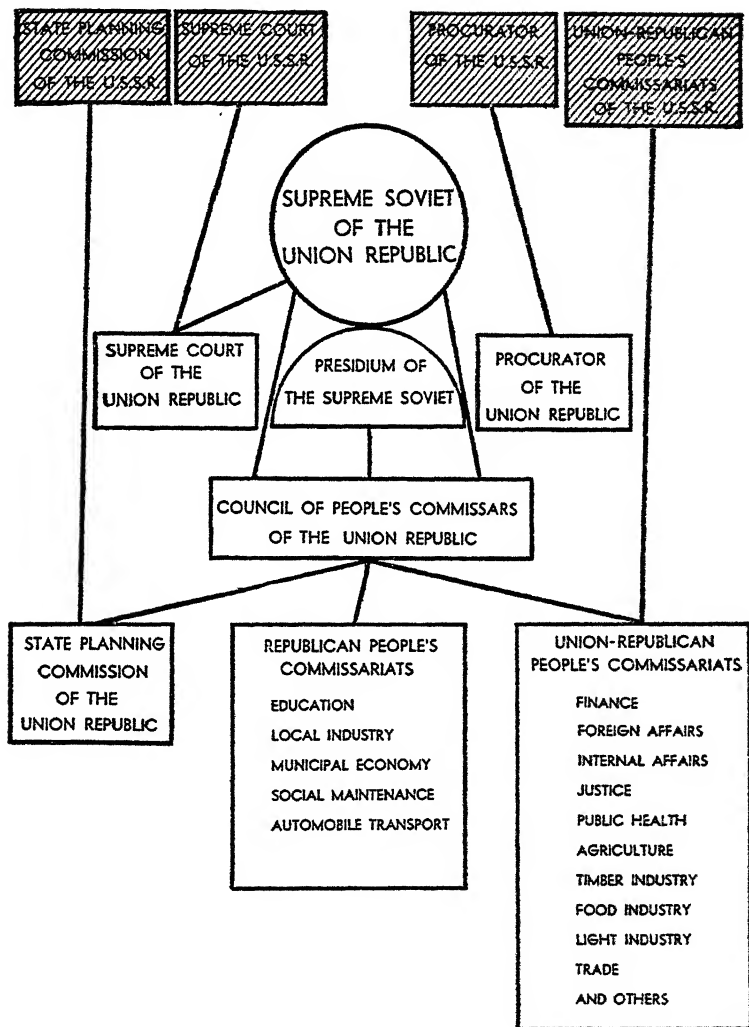
To summarize, then, there are altogether four classes of Commissariats in the governments of the U.S.S.R. and Union Republics: the federal All-Union People's Commissariats, the federal Union-Republican People's Commissariats, the Republics' Union-Republican People's Commissariats (bearing the same name as the corresponding group of federal departments), and the Republican People's Commissariats. These different Commissariats, equivalent to Departments in the federal and state governments of America, are unusually large in number because in the Soviet Union the system of nation-wide planning extends to practically every sphere of economic and cultural life.

Each Union and Autonomous Republic has a State Planning Commission, the Chairman of which is by virtue of his position a member of the Republic's Council of People's Commissars. These republican planning commissions, working closely with the federal planning commission in Moscow, draw up for their

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE OF THE U.S.S.R.



GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE OF A UNION REPUBLIC



respective territories Five-Year and One-Year Plans as parts of the far-reaching plans for the country as a whole. One of the most important features of this inclusive Soviet planning is the complete integration of socio-economic activity with finance under one great unitary budget that takes in all branches of industry, agriculture, commerce, and extra-economic endeavor. Hence the federal government must approve not only the single state budget of the U.S.S.R., but also the taxes and revenues that are included in the budgets of the Union Republics and other national divisions.

The Constitution provides (Article 18) that "the territory of a Union Republic may not be altered without its consent." For administrative and planning purposes most of the Union Republics are divided up into different districts that are listed in the Constitution. For example, Article 27 reads: "The Tadzhik Soviet Socialist Republic consists of the Garm, Kuliab, Leninabad and Stalinabad Regions, and the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region." Only the Gorno-Badakhshan Region has special significance from the nationalities viewpoint. All the Autonomous Regions are mentioned in the Constitution, but the National Districts are not.

The highest organs of government in the Autonomous Regions and National Districts, as well as in the purely administrative areas, in the cities and in the rural localities, are (Article 94) the Soviets of Working People's Deputies. Thus there is the Gorno-Badakhshan Soviet of Working People's Deputies and the Chukot Soviet of Working People's Deputies. Members of all Soviets of Working People's Deputies are elected for two-year terms according to numerical representation: one delegate for every 1,500 to 3,500 people in the Autonomous Regions and one for every 300 to 3,000 in the National Districts.

The Union and Autonomous Republics have their own Supreme Courts, chosen by their Supreme Soviets for a term of five years. The Autonomous Regions and National Districts also have their special courts, elected for five years by their Soviets

of Working People's Deputies. The Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. exercises supervisory jurisdiction over these lower courts. It does not possess the power, however, to declare laws adopted in the different national divisions unconstitutional or contrary to federal statute. Only the Supreme Soviet of the Union can do that.

The central government reserves to itself important powers in that the State Prosecutor (Procurator) of the U.S.S.R., chosen by the Supreme Soviet, appoints the State Prosecutors of the Union Republics, Autonomous Republics, and Autonomous Regions and must approve the Prosecutors of the National Districts. All these Prosecutors, whose duties are even more extensive than those of attorney generals or district attorneys in the United States, "perform their functions independently of any local organs whatsoever, being subordinate solely to the Procurator of the U.S.S.R." (Article 117.)

Do Autonomous Republics necessarily attain the status of Union Republics on reaching a certain stage of development? No, they do not. When Stalin gave his public report on the Constitution in 1936 he stated: "Economic and cultural maturity can no more be urged as grounds for transferring Autonomous Republics to the category of Union Republics than economic or cultural backwardness can be urged as grounds for leaving any particular republic in the list of Autonomous Republics."¹¹ And he then proceeded to give the three main essentials for an Autonomous Republic evolving into a Union Republic.

First, as we saw in connection with the right of a Union Republic to secede, its territory must be on the borders of the U.S.S.R. "Secondly," says Stalin, "the nationality which gives its name to a given Soviet republic must constitute a more or less compact majority within that republic. Take the Crimean Autonomous Republic, for example. It is a border republic, but the Crimean Tatars do not constitute the majority in that re-

public; on the contrary, they are a minority. Consequently, it would be wrong and illogical to transfer the Crimean Republic to the category of Union Republics.

"Thirdly, the republic must not have too small a population; it should have a population of, say, not less but more than a million, at least. Why? Because it would be wrong to assume that a small Soviet Republic with a very small population and a small army could hope to maintain its existence as an independent state. There can hardly be any doubt that the imperialist beasts of prey would soon lay hands on it."¹² There is one exception, however, to this last criterion. That is the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic, whose population is not much more than half a million. Actually, none of the nineteen Autonomous Republics at present satisfies the three conditions laid down by Stalin. In my opinion, Yakutia and Buriat-Mongolia are the most likely ones to become Union Republics in the near future.

In this section it is not without significance that I have quoted so extensively from Premier Joseph Stalin. For Stalin, more than any other top Soviet leader, has been responsible for both the theoretical and practical development of the minorities policy. This is obvious from his *Marxism and the National Question*, the authoritative Soviet book on the subject, and also from his effective work as first and only Soviet Commissar of Nationalities from 1917 to 1923.

Regarding the national question as well as other problems Stalin followed the lead of Lenin, who discussed the matter with him and who had outlined the proper Marxist approach as early as 1894 in his book *Who Are the People's Friends?* Stalin himself became an expert on the multinational state long before the Russian Revolution. Thus in 1911, when he was conferring with Lenin in Cracow across the Austro-Hungarian border, the latter wrote to Maxim Gorky: "Here, with us, is a wonderful young Georgian. He has collected all the Austrian and other material

on the question of nationalities and has settled down to prepare a treatise on the subject." This tireless and able Georgian, Stalin, came from a national group severely oppressed by the Tsars and knew from personal experience the sufferings of his native people. Now risen to the highest positions of leadership in the Soviet Union, he symbolizes better than any other single person the enlightened Soviet policy toward nationalities.

In the early formative years of the Soviet state Stalin, as Commissar of Nationalities, was in direct charge of policy toward the minority peoples and succeeded in putting the new Soviet principles into effect throughout wide sections of the country. His work did much to lay the foundation not only for the establishment of the U.S.S.R. in 1922 through the federation of the first four Union Republics, but also for the rapid actualization of the minorities policy among the many national groups of the Russian Republic. In 1923 Stalin's post was eliminated as no longer necessary, since under the first Constitution of the U.S.S.R. provision was made for a special Chamber of Nationalities that would look after the interests of the minorities.

Language and Culture

In Stalin's definitive volume that I have cited, the author describes a nation as "a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture."¹³ In the Soviet Union, as elsewhere, language has been the most important single element in the determination of nationality, although the other criteria mentioned by Stalin have in no sense been neglected.

The role of language in the existence and development of nationhood in general can hardly be overestimated. The history of nationality has been inseparably bound up with a common and distinct vernacular in which a certain people express themselves.

Without a native tongue, spoken or written, it is difficult, if not impossible, for any people to achieve the spirit of self-consciousness and togetherness characteristic of a nation. Of course a written language is of especial importance in the growth of a national culture and tradition.

Marxist theory brings out the economic significance of language in the rise of capitalist nationalism in the modern world. In Lenin's words, "in order to achieve complete victory for commodity production the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, must have politically united territories with a population speaking the same language, while all obstacles to this language and to its consolidation in literature are removed. Language is the most important means of human intercourse; unity of language and unimpeded development are the most important conditions of a genuinely free and extensive commercial turnover corresponding to modern capitalism, of a free and broad grouping of the population in all their separate classes; finally they are a condition for the close connection between the market and each and every proprietor and petty proprietor, seller and buyer."¹⁴

From the start the Soviets have been aware of the primary place of language in the life of the minority peoples. The 1936 Constitution contains special provisions concerning the native tongues of the various ethnic groups. Thus, Article 40 provides that "laws passed by the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. are published in the languages of the Union Republics." Article 110 is also revealing: "Judicial proceedings are conducted in the language of the Union Republic, Autonomous Republic or Autonomous Region, persons not knowing this language being guaranteed every opportunity of fully acquainting themselves with the material of the case through an interpreter and likewise the right to use their own language in court."

On the official seal of the Soviet Government in 1939, there was printed, according to settled policy, the well-known Marx-

ist slogan "Proletarians of all countries, Unite!" in the separate language of each of the then eleven Union Republics. The name of each Union Republic in its native tongue was also listed on the regular Soviet bank notes. At the present writing neither the government seal nor paper currency appears to have been brought up to date to include the five new Union Republics of 1940. However, the masthead of *Izvestia*, official government newspaper, does print the phrase "Proletarians of all countries, Unite!" in the languages of all sixteen Union Republics.

The great amphitheater of Moscow's new Palace of the Soviets, which is to be the largest and tallest building in the world, will have, according to present plans, a novel system of language translation. To each of the 22,000 seats in the amphitheater, where the Supreme Soviet itself will meet, will be attached a headphone enabling all of the delegates and audience to hear a speaker in any of the sixteen chief Soviet tongues. This "will be managed by a staff of interpreters who will give running translations of each speech into sixteen different microphones."

Actually the laws of the U.S.S.R. are published not only in the languages of the Union Republics, but also in those of the lesser national groups as well. In sections of the country where there are mixed populations the names of railroad stations and other public facilities are posted in several languages. Newspapers are issued and radio broadcasts made in seventy languages, while books are published in no less than 110. All this has naturally involved tremendous expenditures, but has repaid the Soviets beyond reckoning.

In each nationality area of the Soviet Union the language of the predominant minority has primacy. The schools and other educational institutions of the territory function in the native tongue. Russian is the second language taught and is the common medium for communication throughout the U.S.S.R. As a rule, in the Union Republics and their national subdivisions

Russian is not taught in the primary schools. In the secondary schools it is taught for a few hours each week, while in the universities it is a compulsory part of the curriculum. When, however, the Russians themselves constitute a considerable minority, as in the Ukrainian and Kazakh Republics, they are given the privilege of running their own primary schools in the Russian language. But it is mandatory for Russian children to learn at an early age the language of the minority region in which they live.

Soviet linguists, working under the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., have conducted constant research into the origin, structure and relationships of the different languages of the Soviet Union. Since the Revolution of 1917 Soviet experts have drawn up written alphabets, grammars, and dictionaries for about forty of the smaller peoples who possessed only oral languages. More than thirty additional peoples, most of them in the Turco-Tatar group, have substituted simplified alphabets for the complicated Arabic script or, in some cases, Mongol or Chinese script, that they previously used. As the Soviet Government's special Committee of the Union for the New Alphabet explained, the Arabic script "is beyond the reach of the working masses, is confined to a caste, and bound up with religion; and has served for centuries as an instrument of exploitation and enslavement of the working masses in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the Mohammedan divines."

At first the new alphabets were based on Latin characters, but they were later changed to standard Russian (Cyrillic) characters, modified to fit the needs of each people. In some of the national divisions, however, the situation was made more difficult by the fact that in 1917 there existed many different dialects and no commonly accepted vernacular. This was the case in Turkmenia, for instance, where the Soviet authorities had to wage a hard struggle for the acceptance of one written language for the country as a whole. Throughout the Volga

basin, the Caucasus, the Transcaucasus and Soviet Asia the adoption of the more simple alphabets helped greatly in the general advancement of culture.

Louis Fischer tells of meeting in the foothills of the Caucasus "a young Ossetian who had learned the Latin alphabet. I showed him an American magazine and he slowly spelled out the syllables, although he could not understand the words. This feat gave him the sense of having performed a miracle. He said, 'I have jumped across an ocean and touched America. None of my ancestors back to the birth of the earth could ever read his own language. Now I can read yours.' " ¹⁵

Another native of the Caucasus, a poetess, Egin Ajiyeva, belonging to the obscure Kumik people of Daghestan, describes very simply the sense of intellectual freedom that the Soviet policy on languages has brought. Here is her poem:

WE, TOO, HAVE OUR LANGUAGE!

How long, ye little peoples, ye seek
Your hidden, lost language in vain,
Like a birthmark upon a woman's cheek,
That beneath the veil has lain.
We lived long under a bitter yoke,
And our sacred mother-tongue
From her slumber never awoke
Till the spell that roused her was sung.
Now the yoke is consumed
By revolt, the mighty fire;
Now our minds are illumed
And knowledge new we acquire,
We learn to speak, to read, and to write
The tongue that we love as our mother bright.¹⁶

No single element has been more efficacious in the cultural awakening of the Soviet peoples since 1917 than the stress on minority languages. According to Anatole Lunacharsky, former Commissar of Education in the Russian Republic, the policy of having the schools in each nationality division of the U.S.S.R. use the mother tongue was "the most important factor in popu-

lar education." At present upwards of seventy languages are spoken and taught in schools throughout the Soviet Union. This teaching of the different vernaculars has been of immense assistance in reducing the high rate of illiteracy among formerly backward racial and national groups.

The Tsarist census of 1897, which defined literacy as the ability to sign one's name, found that only 24 per cent of the population of the Russian Empire was literate. The estimated figure for 1917, allowing for some progress since 1897, is 30 per cent. But among the less advanced peoples of Tsarist Russia the percentage of literacy was far lower than among the Great Russians and the Ukrainians, for instance. Thus it is estimated that at the time of the Revolution only 2 per cent of the population were literate in Kirgizia and Yakutia, 3 per cent in the Mari territory, 4.7 per cent in Armenia, 11 per cent in Byelo-Russia, and 12 per cent in Georgia. Of course literacy in their native tongue was completely barred out for those many minorities who possessed no written alphabet. And in a number of other cases literacy was impossible for the masses of the people, because the only written language, with little relationship to the spoken vernacular, was that of the religious schools and the priestly caste.

The high illiteracy figures went down rapidly following the development of the true national languages, the formation of written alphabets where none existed, the introduction of compulsory education for children, and widespread literacy campaigns among adults. By 1926 considerable advances in literacy, defined as the capacity either to read or write, had been made among most of the national groups. Thirteen years later, in 1939, the level of literacy almost everywhere in the Soviet Union had gone up phenomenally. Particular progress was registered by the women, whose bad showing previously had greatly pulled down the general average. There follows a table comparing the results of the 1926 and 1939 Soviet censuses in the eleven Union Republics:

PER CENT OF LITERACY, 9 YEARS AND OLDER ¹⁷

Union Republic	Dec. 17, 1926			Jan. 17, 1939		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Russian S.F.S.R.....	72.0	40.2	55.0	92.3	73.0	81.9
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	75.5	40.9	57.5	94.8	76.8	85.3
Byelo-Russian S.S.R....	71.5	35.8	53.1	90.7	68.1	78.9
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R....	33.2	16.4	25.2	81.5	64.5	73.3
Georgian S.S.R.	55.5	39.4	47.5	86.1	74.6	80.3
Armenian S.S.R.....	49.5	19.2	34.5	85.0	62.4	73.8
Turkmen S.S.R.....	16.5	7.7	12.5	73.3	60.6	67.2
Uzbek S.S.R.....	14.2	6.5	10.6	73.6	61.6	67.8
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	6.2	.8	3.7	77.7	65.2	71.7
Kazakh S.S.R.	32.6	12.5	22.8	85.2	66.3	76.3
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	22.1	7.4	15.1	76.7	63.0	70.0
U.S.S.R.....	66.5	37.1	51.1	90.8	72.6	81.2

Obviously, general literacy is an essential foundation for the flourishing of a broad, popular culture in any nation and for the realization of political democracy. As Lenin himself put it: "Without the ABC there is no such thing as politics, but only gossip and prejudice. An illiterate is shut out from politics." It is indisputable that cultural progress among all the Soviet nationalities has gone hand in hand with the evolution of the native languages and the people's facility in speaking, reading, and writing them.

In a comprehensive statistical volume on Soviet culture, entitled *Cultural Construction of the U.S.S.R.* and published in 1940, there is a vast array of data concerning cultural developments in the different national divisions. Since it would be impossible to reproduce all the relevant figures in this book, I have selected comparative statistical tables for the eleven Union Republics of 1939 and covering the basic categories of education, libraries, books, newspapers, and theaters. The five new Republics that entered the U.S.S.R. in 1940, all occupied and ravaged by the Nazis during the Second World War, are not included for the reason that comparable statistics simply do not exist concerning them. The tables follow:

EDUCATION (NUMBER OF STUDENTS) ¹⁸

	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Incomplete Middle (7-Year School)</i>	<i>Higher</i>
<i>Russian S.F.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	4,965,318	149,894	85,000
1928-29	5,997,980	916,992	118,000
1938-39	7,663,669	7,141,242	390,000
<i>Ukrainian S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	1,492,878	44,582	26,700
1928-29	1,585,814	953,747	33,800
1938-39	985,598	2,493,116	124,400
<i>Byelo-Russian S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	235,065	11,846	.....
1928-29	369,684	119,979	4,600
1938-39	358,507	372,459	17,100
<i>Azerbaijani S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	61,249	4,702	.....
1928-29	138,629	38,349	4,400
1938-39	142,758	267,974	11,900
<i>Georgian S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	126,431	10,297	300
1928-29	154,712	94,680	10,300
1938-39	162,175	249,831	22,000
<i>Armenian S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	30,939	833	.....
1928-29	69,272	12,715	1,400
1938-39	25,746	122,140	6,000
<i>Turkmen S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	4,416	988	.....
1928-29	25,503	7,182	.....
1938-39	75,488	100,430	2,400
<i>Uzbek S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	10,970	1,697	.....
1928-29	122,406	22,769	4,000
1938-39	474,809	441,303	18,300
<i>Tadzhik S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	369	.....	.....
1928-29	17,258	840	.....
1938-39	202,921	30,876	1,400
<i>Kazakh S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	96,103	5,140	.....
1928-29	247,843	32,565	100
1938-39	435,180	376,093	7,900
<i>Kirgiz S.S.R.</i>			
1914-15	6,519	422	.....
1928-29	41,355	4,202	.....
1938-39	119,264	116,560	1,500

LIBRARIES ¹⁹

	1922	1939
Russian S.F.S.R.....	13,731	48,561
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	3,067	17,013
Byelo-Russian S.S.R.....	445	3,682
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R.....	69	1,098
Georgian S.S.R.....	129	1,284
Armenian S.S.R.....	85	597
Turkmen S.S.R.....	14	554
Uzbek S.S.R.....	22	1,441
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	4 *	425
Kazakh S.S.R.....	129	2,581
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	34	349

* In 1927.

THEATERS ²⁰

	1914	1933	1939
Russian S.F.S.R.....	107	354	449
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	35	85	101
Byelo-Russian S.S.R....	3	10	15
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R....	2	14	25
Georgian S.S.R.....	3	22	43
Armenian S.S.R.....	none	10	24
Turkmen S.S.R.....	none	5	10
Uzbek S.S.R.....	1	32	44
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	none	9	22
Kazakh S.S.R.....	2	6	35
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	none	4	19

NEWSPAPERS ²¹

	<i>No. of Titles</i>		<i>Circulation</i>	
	1928	1938	1928	1938
Russian S.F.S.R.....	796	5,761	6,474,000	26,710,000
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	234	1,570	1,675,000	5,800,000
Byelo-Russian S.S.R.....	37	199	177,000	976,000
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R.....	23	149	194,000	650,000
Georgian S.S.R.....	31	134	382,000	808,000
Armenian S.S.R.....	9	50	40,000	247,000
Turkmen S.S.R.....	6	61	21,000	209,000
Uzbek S.S.R.....	25	208	244,000	908,000
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	*	72	*	201,000
Kazakh S.S.R.....	30	286	173,000	826,000
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	6	60	51,000	185,000

* For 1928, Tadzhik papers counted with Uzbek.

BOOKS (NUMBER OF TITLES) ²²

	1913	1928	1938
Russian S.F.S.R.....	19,562	24,133	30,231
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	5,283	5,703	4,147
Byelo-Russian S.S.R....	232	693	801
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R.....	275	858	1,030
Georgian S.S.R.....	694	1,142	1,117
Armenian S.S.R.....	55	372	613
Turkmen S.S.R.....	4	165	262
Uzbek S.S.R.....	56	740	792
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	none	56	195
Kazakh S.S.R.....	13	312	467
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	none	55	337

The figures in the foregoing tables speak for themselves and tell eloquently the story of cultural progress in the various Union Republics since 1917. In the subdivisions of these Republics—the Autonomous Republics, the Autonomous Regions, and the National Districts—corresponding advances have occurred.

The significant statistics on the publication of new titles in the Union Republics give some indication of the literary upsurge that has taken place among the Soviet nationalities since the Revolution. It is far more than a revival, because as a matter of fact relatively few of the minority peoples under the Tsars had developed a written literature of note. Today each Union Republic and Autonomous Republic boasts its own national publishing house, which, though printing the widest variety of books, plays, poems, and pamphlets, can never keep up with the demands of the public. Though most of the titles are issued in the language of the particular Republic, large numbers are issued in Russian and in non-Soviet languages. Shakespeare, who is especially popular in the Soviet Union, has been translated into many Soviet tongues, as have Dickens, Balzac, and other foreign authors.

Our comparative tables show also that interest and talent in the drama are widespread not only among the Great Russians

of the Soviet Union, but among the other peoples as well. Cultural interchange in this field is highly developed. Russian and Ukrainian theater groups often visit the outlying Republics, while the theaters of Uzbekistan, Georgia, Armenia and other nationalities frequently perform in cities like Kiev and Moscow. Permanently established in Moscow are the Gypsy and Jewish Theaters, each with its own playhouse. The House of Soviet Armenian Culture includes a studio for talented drama students from the three Transcaucasian Republics. The Soviet capital also has a Theater of Folk Art that regularly stages dramatic and musical performances from the remotest regions of the U.S.S.R.

Friendly cultural competition also goes on among the different peoples in the All-Union Olympiads of Art and Drama, Music, and the Dance. Mr. Albert Rhys Williams well describes one of the Moscow Olympiads: "A wasp-waisted Georgian in the 'dagger dance' moves slowly as he drives the silvered knives into the earth, then, pulling them out and holding them between his teeth, breaks into a wild and furious pace. The Ukrainians, now in a squat position with quick leg flings to the front, then upright and rotating like revolving pillars, finish their famous *Hopak* in a whirlwind of leaping, flying bodies. Eskimos pantomime episodes in the hunting of the Polar bear and the walrus. Tatars, to the plaintive Eastern music, do their symbolic dances ending with the *emenia*, a light rippling movement of the head. To the strains of the accordion and the rat-tat-tat of wooden spoons a group of villagers go through the lively figures of the *Yablochka*. . . . A group of Caucasians break into the weird *Lezghinka* goaded to a maddening tempo by the hand claps and cries of 'Tosh!' 'Tosh!' from the spectators. A troupe of Gypsies follows with tambourines and tinkling bracelets."²³

In Moscow, too, are held from time to time the ten-day reviews, or "decades," of national theater and musical art devoted to the achievements of some particular Union or Autonomous

Republic. For a period of ten days the leading actors, singers, dancers, and musicians from one minority Republic stage their best performances and become the center of attention for the artistic world of Moscow and, through the press, of the country as a whole. These reviews are unquestionably a great stimulus to the development of multinational culture in the U.S.S.R.

Some of Moscow's excellent museums play a vital role in Soviet intercultural understanding. First and foremost here is the Museum of the Peoples of the U.S.S.R., which contains a wealth of exhibits, charts, and other material concerning the hard past of the minorities under Tsarist rule and their development under the Soviets. The museum has special sections dealing with different parts of the Soviet Union such as the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far North. The Museum of Eastern Civilizations includes sections on the prerevolutionary and contemporary art of some of the important Soviet peoples. And, finally, the State Historical Museum gives over various halls to exhibits of early tribal society along the Volga and elsewhere, the Greek colonies on the Black Sea, and the Golden Horde of the conquering Mongols. Leningrad likewise has a special Museum of Eastern Culture and a Museum of Peoples of the U.S.S.R.

Regional art festivals also serve to acquaint the many Soviet peoples with one another. For instance, a recent Transcaucasian Music Festival at Tbilisi had as participants 1,200 musicians from Armenia, Azerbaidzhan, and Georgia. Capacity audiences attended the fifteen concerts of the festival, the programs of which included symphonies, suites, concertos for violin and piano, string quartets, songs, and choruses. The ensembles of folk music and dancing were staged picturesquely at the foot of a steep mountain. This festival uncovered a gratifying array of young native talent and demonstrated that the music of the Transcaucasus had made great strides even during the Nazi-Soviet war.

Then here is a 1945 news item about Eskimos, Chukchis, and

representatives of various peoples from the Kamchatka Peninsula in the Soviet Far East arriving at the port of Petropavlovsk to take part in a review of amateur drama, dance, and song circles. To this same intercultural assembly came, from their scattered settlements in the taiga, native handicraft workers who brought for exhibit and comparison their intricate embroideries, clothing of reindeer skin, and carvings on bone and wood.

Of enormous importance in the life of the minority peoples has been the growth of science in the various national divisions of the Soviet Union. The central Soviet Government, consciously depending on science as its guide, has spared no effort to spread scientific knowledge and methods among the many national groups throughout the country. Scientific awareness on the part of the entire Soviet population has been a necessity for its successful adoption of socialist and machine techniques in industry and agriculture. A huge network of research laboratories has been established from one end of the land to the other; scientific expeditions have explored the uttermost recesses of the far-flung Republics and Regions. Seven Union Republics now have their own Academies of Sciences as branches of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

In no sphere has scientific progress among the Soviet nationalities made greater strides than in that of medicine. The system of public health in the U.S.S.R., which makes free medical service the right of all the people, has brought tremendous benefits to all the ethnic groups without exception. For in every part of the former Empire the great majority of the inhabitants were positively medieval in their treatment of disease and their ignorance of the most simple laws of hygiene. All but universal was the reliance on spells, incantations, the magic powers of ikons and holy water, faith healing or other dark religious superstitions.

Throughout Central Asia and Siberia the natives depended largely on witch doctors and sorcery to cure them of illness.

In Kazakhstan, according to Miss Strong, a favorite treatment "consisted in wrapping the sick man in the bloody skin of a freshly killed lamb—the meat of the lamb went to the witch doctor—seating him on red-hot stones and flogging him until he fainted. When the patient lost consciousness the witch doctor rejoiced that the 'evil spirit is leaving.' " ²⁴ In Uzbekistan belief in charms for the cure of sickness was common. Blue beads were supposed to subdue a cough, yellow beads to soothe a fever, and red beads to stop a chill.

Soviet introduction of such elementary practices as taking a bath and cutting the hair at first met much opposition from some of the peoples. And among tribes where it was the custom to sleep on the floor the hygienic advantages of beds had to be explained carefully and the children taught that the fear of falling out and getting hurt was unjustified. Many of the minorities under Tsarist rule forced women to undergo severe ordeals at the time of childbirth, treating them as veritable outcasts during this period. Soviet stress on the care of women during pregnancy and of children from the very moment of birth has vastly eased the difficulties of motherhood and has cut the infant mortality by half in most of the national divisions.

In the rural sections of the more backward national districts the so-called "cultural attacks" were once a familiar phenomenon and effective in teaching the people what clean and healthful living entailed. "Cultural soldiers" by the hundreds—workers, Communists, students, and others—would come from the cities to the villages and collective farms and give free instruction in everything from hygiene to the drama. These volunteer brigades of culture showed the villagers how to use soap, how to take care of babies, how to wash the children, and how to keep things clean in general. In truth, nothing has been more necessary or important for the masses of the people of every Soviet nationality than to learn the simple rules of cleanliness.

Another potent device in the propaganda for culture and health was the mock trials in which amateur actors took the roles of the accused such as drunkards, wife-beaters, women with dirty or smoky huts, and sometimes even inanimate objects. In her noteworthy book *Women in the Soviet East*, Fannina Halle describes the well-attended trial of a dirty dress and unwashed kettle, both of which were brought into court. In self-defense the dress tells its life story: "At first I was well content and caressed my mistress's body, for she looked very pretty in me and wore me only on holidays. But my happiness soon came to an end; I was worn every day and never washed, till I was transformed to the mass of filthy rags that you now see before you. I could die of shame, for I am so covered with dirt, dung and sand that I weigh several pounds, and I must confess, to my shame, that my folds are swarming with lice and fleas. You laugh, Citizen Judge, but I weep and beg fervently for mercy, for it is not my fault. It is all the fault of my mistress, dirty Suley."²⁵ The court condemned the dress to be burnt and the kettle to be broken to pieces, but then commuted both sentences to lifelong segregation "in view of the extenuating circumstances and the proletarian origin of the accused."

During the twenty-eight years since 1917 the state health authorities have succeeded in practically eliminating the terrible scourges of old Russia such as typhus and cholera and have greatly reduced the incidence of tuberculosis, venereal disease and trachoma. All of the sixteen Union Republics and nineteen Autonomous Republics have their own busy, always overworked Commissariats of Public Health. The training of native nurses and physicians has everywhere proceeded at a rapid pace. Dentistry and dental clinics, sure signs of a twentieth century civilization, have been established in the farthest reaches of the Soviet Union. In addition to the specific cure and prevention of disease, the general betterment of living conditions has of course

been an immense factor in improving the health of the many Soviet peoples.

Following is a table showing the comparative number of physicians in the territories of the first twelve Union Republics in 1913 and 1940:

DOCTORS ²⁶

	1913	1940
Russian S.F.S.R.....	12,956	84,187
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	5,152	26,624
Byelo-Russian S.S.R.....	495	3,038
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R.....	291	3,020
Georgian S.S.R.....	351	4,670
Armenian S.S.R.....	57	915
Turkmen S.S.R.....	56	891
Uzbek S.S.R.....	128	2,860
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	13	592
Kazakh S.S.R.....	196	2,575
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	15	526
Karelo-Finnish S.S.R.....	35	340

Outdoor sports, too, confined to a small minority in Tsarist times, have been taken up with enthusiasm by the masses of the population in the Republics of both Europe and Asia and have done much to develop their all-round physical fitness. The best athletes from the different nationalities compete with one another in the All-Union Spartakiads of Sport at Moscow and in national championship contests in track, swimming, skiing, tennis, basketball and other sports. On Physical Culture Day, celebrated normally on a Sunday in July, a number of Soviet nationalities send groups of athletes to participate in the great parade through the Red Square in Moscow. Physical Culture Day was held again in 1944 for the first time since the Nazi invasion. Among other features was a soccer game in the big Moscow stadium, between the Tbilisi Dynamo and the Moscow Torpedo teams. The Georgians won 2-1. Parades and sports meets also took place in cities of the Union Republics such as Kiev, Alma-Ata, Tashkent, and Stalinabad.

From this brief survey of cultural developments among the

minorities of the U.S.S.R., I think we are justified in stating that the progress attained has fulfilled to an impressive degree the general principle laid down as far back as 1913 by Joseph Stalin, in discussing a limited sphere of the nationalities question. "The national problem in the Caucasus," he wrote, "can be solved only by drawing the backward nations and peoples into the common stream of a higher culture. . . . Regional autonomy in the Caucasus is acceptable because it draws the backward nations into the common cultural development; it helps them to cast off the shell of isolation peculiar to small nationalities; it impels them forward and facilitates access to the benefits of a higher culture."²⁷

In the very distant future the cultural pluralism of the Soviet Union may give way to a qualitatively different sort of civilization in which the different national cultures, after developing to their fullest extent and revealing all their potential qualities, merge into "a single, common culture with a single common language." But this outcome will take place, according to Communist theory, only after socialism is adopted by the entire world and becomes a matured system internationally. Presumably at that point the culture of the Soviet Union will fuse with the rest of socialist culture. These vague and far-off possibilities are, however, clearly speculative and exercise but little current influence.

The cultural and scientific coming of age of the Soviet peoples has all along followed the formula, laid down by Stalin himself, of being "national in form and socialist in content" as distinguished from "national in form and bourgeois in content." This means that literature, art, drama, journalism, science, and other expressions of culture are free to develop in the native languages and national forms, but that they must stay within the broad circle of fundamental Marxist principles in what they say. And they are subject to the general controls of Communist dictatorship and censorship in effect throughout the Soviet Union.

The result has not been to turn the many national cultures of the U.S.S.R. into mere vehicles of propaganda on behalf of the new socialist order. True, there is plenty of such propaganda in the different Republics. But the official restrictions on cultural expression are more to prevent the negation of Marxist doctrine than to insist on its continual affirmation. Thus the newly developed cultures in all the Republics have laid great stress on the revival of folk art and literature primarily concerned with a nationality's past and long-established traditions. Yet if Soviet writers representing a particular people become too boastful and vainglorious about their nation, they are likely to be rebuked for manifesting old-time chauvinism contrary to the spirit of the new nationalities policy.

One important exception to the rule of "national in form and socialist in content" is in the matter of religion. As guaranteed under the Soviet Constitution, there is freedom of religious worship in all the national divisions, but there can hardly be insistence on socialist content in such worship for the reason that Soviet socialism is antireligious in principle. Hence religious practices go on freely in the various Republics so long as they do not become involved in counterrevolutionary activity, which was often the case in the early years following the Revolution. Religious sects are also not allowed to continue customs that are clearly violative of health, such as the self-mutilation of the Skopts; of morals, such as the sex orgies of the Khlists; or of the Constitution and laws of the country.

The social result among the Soviet nationalities of almost three decades of cultural autonomy and legal equality, reinforced by the many economic changes, has been to create a spirit throughout the U.S.S.R. very much in accord with the constitutional provisions I have already cited. However, it would be an exaggeration to say and Utopian to expect that all racial and national prejudice has disappeared from the Soviet Union. Lingering traces of the old hates and suspicions between the different ethnic groups undoubtedly still exist here and there,

particularly among the older people. But these feelings, understandable holdovers from the Tsarist regime, definitely constitute exceptions.

The fact is that over the whole vast area of the U.S.S.R., stretching from Poland in the west to Japan in the east, the 177 different Soviet peoples, irrespective of race or color, nationality or physiognomy, mingle with one another at will, attend the same educational institutions, sit next to each other at theaters and other places of amusement, travel and eat together, live at the same hotels or clubs, participate on equal terms in the same crafts or professions, join the same trade unions and cultural associations, vote on precisely the same basis, and are elected or appointed to public office. Furthermore, men and women of whatever nationality marry each other if there is mutual affection; and constant marital intermixture does actually take place.

No person or persons in the Soviet Union can be barred, on account of race or nationality, from a hotel or vacation resort, from a restaurant or inn, from some section of a train or trolley, or from a special residential district within a city. The opinion of foreign visitors to the U.S.S.R. is almost unanimous in testifying that the various peoples associate together freely in every visible way. In large cities such as Moscow and Kiev there are always a considerable number of Soviet citizens from the minority Republics of the Volga, the Caucasus, or Asia. And one of the best means of obtaining a sense of the multinational character of the Soviet commonwealth is to see the polyglot audiences at the theater, opera, and other places of amusement.

American Negroes who have been in the Soviet Union bear witness to the absence of racial prejudice and discrimination in that country. Paul Robeson, outstanding Negro singer of the United States, has traveled far and wide through the U.S.S.R. on several concert tours. "Everywhere I went," he states, "I found the same welcome, the same warm interest, the same expression of sincere comradeship toward me, as a black man, as

a member of one of the most oppressed of human groups.”²⁸ In 1937 Mr. Robeson took his son Pauli with him to Moscow where he left him temporarily with the boy’s grandmother.

“When we returned to Moscow,” Robeson writes, “we found him a different child; no longer shy, sensitive and moody, unconsciously defending himself against rebuff, against being an ‘outsider.’ He was *one of the children*, he was a member of the group, and he reveled in this great experience. He held his head high, his shoulders back; the children, the school have taken him in; he ‘belonged.’ We were deeply moved by his eager face, his quick smile.”²⁹ Eventually Paul Robeson left Pauli at school in Moscow for several years.

The governmental authorities of the different national divisions are quick to prosecute any citizen or citizens who violate the Constitution by advocating “racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt.” And they will not brook, either, the expression of racial animosity by foreigners who are temporarily on Soviet territory. Thus in 1930 in the city of Stalin-grad two white American workers by the names of Lewis and Brown insulted and assaulted an American Negro in a common dining hall where they were eating. A local court tried the case, found that Lewis and Brown were guilty of race hatred and recommended that they be sent to prison for two years. The court later modified the sentence “to deportation and exclusion from the Soviet Union for a period of ten years.” Of course very few Negroes, not more than 1,000 altogether, live in the U.S.S.R.

Foreign critics occasionally claim that a large amount of racial prejudice, especially anti-Semitism, still exists in the Soviet Union. Some of them have asserted, for example, that the campaign against Leon Trotsky, who was a Jew, and his followers, a number of whom were likewise Jewish, was motivated to a considerable degree by downright anti-Semitism. In my opinion there is not the slightest evidence to back up this charge. For from the start the struggle against Trotsky and Trotskyites in

the U.S.S.R. stemmed from far-reaching political issues dealing with domestic and foreign affairs. And the many eminent Soviet citizens who came to grief in the trials and purges that accompanied this ruthless internecine quarrel were of the most diverse nationalities and ethnic origins.

Undeniably the Soviets established their socialist civilization on a firm foundation only after years of violence, bloodshed, and hardship. Yet throughout the many bitter episodes of a new social order fighting for its life the Soviets never resorted to coercion against individuals or groups because of their race or nationality. The use of force was ordinarily based on *class* and directed at those who opposed socialism and the Communist dictatorship: against capitalists, landlords, and nobility as contrasted with the proletariat, against the rich peasants or *kulaks* as contrasted with the poor peasants.

Hence many members of the old upper classes among the minority peoples felt the heavy hand of the Soviet Government, but not in any sense because of their being non-Russians. The government dealt harshly with fairly large and influential groups in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia, not because they were Georgians or Armenians or Uzbeks, but because they were "bourgeois nationalists" or under the control of the Mensheviks, a political party irreconcilably opposed to the Bolsheviks or Communists. These groups, the Communist claimed, were attempting to set up non-socialist states that would manifest the very chauvinism and ancient hatreds toward neighboring peoples that the Soviet nationalities policy was seeking to eradicate once and for all.

At the same time the Soviet authorities fought hard against survivals of Great Russian chauvinism, described by Stalin as "the rankest kind of nationalism, which strives to obliterate all that is not Russian, to gather all the threads of administration into the hands of Russians and to crush everything that is not Russian."⁸⁰ Yet there was plenty of local chauvinism, too:

against the Great Russians themselves and against the minority or minorities within some national division. Thus the Georgians displayed chauvinism against the Armenians, Abkhasians, and Adzharians within the Georgian Republic, the Azerbaidzhanians against the Armenians in their Republic, and the Uzbeks against the Turkmenians and Kirgiz in Uzbekistan.

For many years after the Revolution the Soviet Government faced a most difficult task in the replacement of the predominantly Russian officials and professional people in the minority regions with native men and women able to fill the jobs. At first, due to the backwardness of many of the minority groups there were few persons properly trained, either culturally or politically, who could assume positions of responsibility. It took a long time to remedy this situation and to establish the necessary network of schools, colleges and technical institutes.

Educational institutions within the various Republics have been supplemented by the Central Institute of Pedagogical Research Among the Nationalities, in Moscow, which trains native teachers of education and research workers for the different Republics; and by the University of the Peoples of the East, which functioned in the Soviet capital for more than fifteen years and until the opportunities for higher education in the Soviet East were deemed sufficient. In Leningrad there still exists the Institute of the Peoples of the North which will presumably be discontinued when there is no longer a special need for it. The aim, and the result in increasing measure, has been to have native personnel take over more and more official and professional positions in the national divisions. This decidedly does not mean, however, that there is any discrimination against the many Great Russians living in the minority regions, since naturally they possess the same rights as anyone else to seek office and professional advancement.

The Liberation of Women

It can be laid down as a general rule that among nations backward in an economic or cultural sense the lot of the women is on the whole worse than that of the men. Even the progressive civilizations of England and America have not yet achieved the complete liberation of women. And so it is no surprise to find that in semifeudal Tsarist Russia women were widely treated as little better than slaves. Old Russian proverbs stress the inherent inferiority of women. Here is a typical one: "A hen is no bird, and a woman is no human being." Other proverbs encouraged the harsh treatment of wives and daughters-in-law. "Love your wife like your soul," went one saying, "but thrash her like a pear tree." Or, "Beat your wife, the food will be tastier." Then this, too: "And who will bring the water?—the daughter-in-law. And who will be beaten?—the daughter-in-law. And why should she be beaten?—because she is the daughter-in-law!"

The Soviet regime took prompt measures to end the age-old inequality of women, passed laws against wife-beating and various forms of sex discrimination, facilitated divorce, enacted special legislation for the care of mothers and children, encouraged girls and women throughout the U.S.S.R. to take advantage of the new educational and economic opportunities. The Soviet attitude is summed up in Article 122 of the 1936 Constitution: "Women in the U.S.S.R. are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life. The possibility of exercising these rights is ensured to women by granting them an equal right with men to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, and by state protection of the interests of mother and child, prematernity and maternity leave with full pay, and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens."

Just as the minorities within the Empire of the Tsars led a harder existence than the Great Russians, so the women of the subject peoples endured greater suffering and indignity than the Russian women. This was in the first instance due to the more primitive economic conditions in the minority territories and the fact that the women in many sections did most of the real work. But throughout a large part of the old Empire another factor immensely complicated and worsened the situation. That was the religion and culture of Mohammedanism, which prevailed in much of the Volga basin, in the Caucasus and Transcaucasus, in Central Asia, and in parts of Siberia. It was primarily the Turco-Tatar peoples in these different regions who worshipped Allah and his prophet Mohammed.

Mohammed himself had nine wives, so that the Moslem custom of polygamy became firmly established early in the history of the religion. Polygamy and bigamy, however, were perhaps not the worst aspect of Mohammedan marriage. More serious in its consequences was the fact that marriage in Islamic countries represented a purely commercial contract in which the bride was regarded as a chattel and literally sold to her prospective husband. The *kalym* or purchase price was a matter of bargaining between the respective fathers according to a woman's beauty, youth, and general abilities. If there was competition for a woman, the highest bidder won. The *kalym* was frequently paid in kind, that is, in terms of cows, sheep, horses, camels, rugs, household implements, and what not. A rich man might pay up to fifty animals for an especially attractive wife.

Bride purchase in the Mohammedan districts of Tsarist Russia carried other flagrant evils in its train. In the first place, it led inevitably to a large number of cruel and hateful child marriages in which girls as young as eight or ten would be sold to middle-aged or even elderly men. Such unfortunate children tended to become mere household slaves, to develop ill health, and to become prematurely old. In the second place, the tradition of bride purchase, when a man was too poor to pay a sub-

stantial *kalym* for a wife, resulted in bride abduction, which often amounted simply to blackmailing the woman's family into reducing the purchase price. Under the Tsars, bride abduction was particularly prevalent among the smaller peoples of the Caucasus Mountains.

In the third place, bride purchase almost totally barred out marriage for love. The bride and groom might never have seen each other till the day of marriage. And though the woman's consent to the contract was supposedly required, actually this formality meant little. Since a Moslem wife was a mere commodity, the husband might resell her at a higher price than he paid and thus make a good profit. Divorce was practically impossible for a woman, though comparatively easy for a man. If the husband died, the wife remained the property of his family and could be made to marry his brother, his uncle, or some other relative, regardless of how many wives this new husband already had. It is clear that polygamy in general enabled the Moslem male of means to acquire female slaves almost at will.

The Mohammedans further ensured the subjection of women by forcing upon them isolation from the community and the wearing of the veil. These two measures were based on the assumption, not limited to the Moslem world, that the female of the species is a particularly sensual and morally unstable being and must therefore be guarded to the utmost against temptation. In Central Asia, Moslem women were confined the greater part of their lives in the harem, or *ichkari*. They were forbidden to speak even to their husband's parents or relatives except after a long period of years and under special circumstances.

The veil which the women of Islam wore outside the privacy of the harem or dwelling was a thin kerchief which usually covered the face up to the eyes. In Uzbekistan the veil consisted of "a thick, black, horsehair net, the *chachvan*, like a sieve, without even holes for the eyes." In addition to this, Uzbek

women were afflicted by the *paranja*, a long, dismal garment falling from the top of the head to the knees—a sort of super-veil. These hideous coverings of the Moslem women not only cut them off from normal contact with their fellow human beings and nature's world of sunshine and beauty, but also proved most injurious to their health.

The basic Mohammedan customs that I have been describing existed in varying patterns and degrees in the Moslem regions of Tsarist Russia, with the situation differing according to economic conditions. Thus in the poorer districts polygamy was infrequent for the simple reason that the men could not afford to pay the purchase price for more than one wife or, at most, for more than two wives. Among nomad groups and rural populations, where the women worked in the fields, it was plainly impossible to enforce female isolation and the wearing of the veil. It was, in fact, in the cities and among the more well-to-do that the barbaric Mohammedan practices concerning women flourished in their purest and most untrammelled form. But everywhere in Tsarist Islam there prevailed the same contempt for women, the same subordination to the male as master and petty dictator.

In Central Asia, if husband and wife went out together, which was seldom, he probably would be riding a horse while she followed humbly behind on foot. Men and women ordinarily did not eat together; and the women got the leftovers. Some of the Caucasian mountain peoples had a strange custom that prohibited women from wearing cloaks or warm outer garments, even during the winter. As can be easily imagined, this was a large factor in raising the mortality rate among women. In the Kabardino-Balkarian region the percentage of female mortality was at one time 86 out of 100 deaths and in the Karachai region 80 out of 100. In the Transcaucasus among the Alpine Khevsurs, who believed that pregnant women were essentially impure, expectant mothers were sent, for two weeks before the birth of their child, into absolute solitude and forced to live in

an isolated stone hut—dark, cold, small, and containing only a bundle of straw for a bed.

The task of the Soviet regime was nothing less than to root out the whole Mohammedan attitude toward women, to eliminate permanently the entire traditional network of uncivilized customs and practices that I have outlined, and to substitute for them an altogether new psychology and set of institutions. This was a formidable undertaking for the Soviets and had to be carried out with the utmost tact and skill, lest the religious feelings of the Moslem peoples be irrevocably outraged. But ultimately the job was largely accomplished.

In dealing with this problem in the Moslem districts of the U.S.S.R. the Soviet authorities made the threefold approach of legal enactment, educational and propaganda campaigns, and economic reform. The Soviet Government passed sweeping laws against polygamy, bigamy, bride purchase, bride abduction and child marriage. But so slowly and cautiously was it compelled to move that such laws did not go into effect for the whole Soviet Union until 1928. As an example I cite the law against marriage by purchase: "The payment of a purchase price for a bride (*kalym*) by the bridegroom to the parents or relatives or kindred of the bride, in the form of ready money or cattle or other goods, or of personal service, is punishable by imprisonment or hard labor for a period not exceeding one year. The acceptance of *kalym* incurs the same penalties, in addition to a fine equivalent to the purchase price." Paradoxically enough, the Soviet Government, while in the very process of abolishing in the Mohammedan regions polygamy and other practices offensive to Western morals, was widely accused of generally undermining the sacred institutions of home and family!

In the long crusade for the emancipation of women in the Soviet East the most intense and dramatic struggles revolved around the wearing of the veil, visible and ever-present symbol of the Moslem woman's lot as well as a hateful instrument in her degradation. By 1924 "Away with the Veil!" had become

the fighting slogan of hundreds of thousands of women throughout the Mohammedan districts.

As Fannina Halle says, "The agitation soon assumed the most vehement forms and swelled to a mass movement which swept Central Asia like a tempest. In Bukhara, where economic and social antagonisms during the Revolution led to particularly violent clashes, and where the anti-*paranja* tempest roused wild enthusiasm, the women, who had organized themselves in flying columns, demanded legal prohibition of the veil; they themselves took action and carried out regular *paranja* raids. Poor women tore the veils from the heads of the rich, whom the movement had hardly touched, in the open streets, forced their way into their houses during a wedding or any special festivity, collected the valuable *paranjas* in heaps, and either set fire to them in the inner courtyards, or altered them to clothing for the poor in sewing rooms specially established for the purpose."³¹

Naturally the forces of social reaction and of orthodox Mohammedanism bitterly resisted the campaign against the veil and organized their own counteroffensive. The Moslem priests, or *mullahs*, threatened women who unveiled with eternal hell-fire and interpreted every untoward event, such as a drought or an earthquake, as a sign of Allah's profound displeasure over so many women casting off the veil. The most extreme and effective measures of the last-ditch fighters for the old tradition were those involving threats of violence, beatings, and actual murder. Hundreds of women became martyrs to the cause. In Soviet Central Asia at least 500 women who threw off the veil were killed by their enraged husbands or other men. The proportion of murders was greatest in Turkmenia and smallest in Kirgizia.

So the success of the campaign against the veil ebbed and flowed. Tens of thousands of women who in the nineteen-twenties had rebelled against the wearing of the veil were persuaded or frightened into later resuming its use. But as time

went on the new ideas, with the full weight of the Soviet regime behind them, won out. And the active part that Moslem women played on the home front in the war with the Nazis put the finishing touches on the general discarding of the veil. Today in the Mohammedan regions of the U.S.S.R. relatively few women adhere to the ancient custom of the veil.

Soviet economic developments in the minority territories have helped immensely in the liberation of women. Obviously Moslem women could not properly operate the complicated machinery in the growing industrial establishments and on the newly formed collective farms unless they had full liberty of movement. And this meant their getting rid of hampering and unnatural coverings. As regards bride purchase, the collectivization of livestock greatly reduced the ability of the average man to pay for a wife in kind. Women in the Soviet East also gained immeasurably by acquiring equal rights with men to land and water; and considerable numbers of widows and unmarried women have organized themselves into agricultural co-operatives.

An unmistakable sign of the advancement of women among the Soviet peoples is their free and open participation in political life, something that rarely, if ever, happened under the Tsars. In the elections of 1937, 112 women were chosen as deputies to the Soviet of Nationalities, a much larger proportion than were sent by the electorate to the Soviet of the Union. At present the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics have 848 women members and those of the Autonomous Republics 578.

Large numbers of women hold responsible positions in the governments of the Union Republics and other national divisions, and in the city or village soviets of the various minority regions. Let us take as an example Bakhtygul Altybayeva, People's Commissar of Light Industry in Turkmenia and first woman in the Central Asian Republics to become a People's Commissar. Born in a small village near the Caspian Sea, she started work as a rug-weaver at the age of ten and was sold in

marriage at thirteen to a Turkmenian fisherman, becoming a mother at sixteen. Her husband soon acquired a second wife who treated Bakhtygul badly and made her do all the household chores. Not long after the 1917 Revolution, Bakhtygul, hearing about the new Soviet laws against bigamy, ran away from her husband and discarded the veil.

She went to the city of Krasnovodsk where she worked hard as a shop assistant and attended night school, at which for the first time she learned to read and write. Recalling this period of her life, she said: "It was as though I had been born all over again. For the first time in my life I lived up to my name." (Bakhtygul means "happy goose.") Within the next few years she taught in a kindergarten and helped to organize special schools for illiterate women. Her background as a rug-weaver, however, was not overlooked and she finally was selected as the Chairman of the Turkmenian Association of Rug Weaving Co-operatives. Then in 1937 Bakhtygul Altybayeva was appointed as head of the Commissariat of Light Industry and in the same year was elected as a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

The general progress of women in the Soviet Union since 1917 is a large subject with infinite ramifications extending to all of the Union Republics and other national divisions. It is not the task of this book, however, to take up in detail the tremendous advances of Soviet women in literacy and culture, in simple health and the complex job of motherhood, in technical skills and mechanical abilities, in the capacity to participate successfully in all phases of Soviet life. The women of every Soviet nationality—of the populous Slav Republics as well as of the smaller and more backward ethnic divisions—have shared in these significant gains. Instead of trying to tell that long and noteworthy story I have concentrated on one meaningful aspect of it, that of women in relation to Mohammedanism, a difficult and complicated problem that has been distinctive to a number of Soviet peoples.

Economic, Scientific, and Ethical Principles

The cultural and political evolution of the many nationalities in the Soviet Union has gone hand in hand with their industrial and agricultural development along socialist lines. And this fact is fully in accordance with the Marxist theory that the predominant factor in the flow of human history is the economic structure of society as embodied in the total relations of production. As Friedrich Engels put it: "The political, legal, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development rest upon the economic. But they all react upon one another and upon the economic base. . . . Men make their own history, but in a given, conditioning milieu, upon the basis of actual relations already extant, among which the economic relations, no matter how much they are influenced by relations of a political and ideological order, are ultimately decisive."³²

It is easy to see that a flourishing and expanding economic system makes possible a flourishing and expanding culture. The production on a large scale of books, newspapers, musical instruments, and medical equipment, the building of hospitals, schools, libraries and theaters, are, in the first instance, a problem of economics. Obviously education, medicine, literature, and the arts must all have a material foundation. Furthermore, a carefully planned economy such as exists throughout the Soviet Union can allocate ample funds from the budget to the general field of culture for the employment of adequate personnel as well as for material needs.

In their analysis of the nationalities problem the Soviet Communists have always made clear that in their opinion the fundamental roots of national and racial prejudice and persecution are economic. When these roots have been eradicated through the elimination of poverty, depression, and unemployment, so that different peoples do not fear one another as economic competitors, then the traditional hatreds and antagonisms tend

to die out. Social psychologists, both Communist and non-Communist, have long pointed out the extent to which group as well as individual tensions result from economic insecurity. In an economy of scarcity, one racial or national group may have real reason to dread the competition of another for the limited supply of jobs and material goods available. And a group having a general sense of rancor or inferiority arising from constant want and exploitation is only too likely to work out its frustrations in hostile actions and attitudes towards other groups.

According to the Soviet view, the planned socialist system of the U.S.S.R. has eradicated the basic causes of interracial and inter-national friction within the country by ensuring economic security for everyone from birth until death. The Soviet Constitution guarantees all citizens "the right to maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or loss of capacity to work"; "the right to rest and leisure"; and "the right to employment and payment for their work in accordance with its quantity and quality." Thus unemployment has literally been made unconstitutional in the Soviet Union! In a more general sense the new regime has brought unity among the Soviet nations by giving them the great common aim of building socialism; and by providing the whole population, in the nation-wide campaigns to put across the Five-Year Plans, publicized as vast battles of economic construction, with what the American philosopher, William James, called "the moral equivalent of war."

Only the political and economic system of socialism, the Soviets claim, can permanently do away with the curse of racial and national prejudice. The typical national state evolved in modern times with the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. And while the triumph of capitalist nationalism represented a considerable advance for humanity, it brought a number of evils in its train. The Marxist believes that the capitalist class in each country is bound to exploit not only the workers, but also the national and racial minorities therein.

National oppression is inevitable throughout the capitalist world as a whole because the continuance of capitalism in the twentieth century depends on imperialism. And imperialism by its very nature involves the exploitation of entire nations as colonies or semi-colonies as well as periodic wars over markets, colonial possessions, and spheres of influence.

It was Karl Marx himself who formulated the principle that no nation can be truly free if it oppresses other nations, saying "a nation which enslaves another nation forges its own chains." Lenin developed this thought in his essay "On the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," where he states: "The misfortune of a nation subjugating other nations is strengthening reaction throughout Russia."³³ And he makes this interesting comparison: "Reaction in Great Britain is strengthened and fed by the enslavement of Ireland, just as reaction in Russia is fed by the latter's enslavement of a number of nations."³⁴

According to Marxist theory, the proletariat, or working class, in the various capitalist countries will eventually emancipate itself by eliminating the capitalists as a class and establishing the new system of socialism. And it will at the same time emancipate, under the banner of proletarian internationalism, the oppressed nations and races. This is precisely what happened, the Marxists say, in the Soviet Union, the only land where a true socialist revolution has taken place. There, under the leadership of the working class and the Communist Party, the old dislike and distrust between the national groups has given way to mutual friendship and mutual aid during both war and peace.

Certain special economic problems have characterized the growth of the various Soviet nationalities since 1917. The most basic of these by far was the sheer economic backwardness, carrying with it a corresponding cultural and political backwardness, of almost all the minorities as compared with the Great Russians, who were themselves none too far advanced. However, under the Tsars industrial capitalism had developed to a considerable degree in Russia proper, as well as in Byelo-

Russia, the Ukraine, and small sections of Armenia and Azerbaidzhan. But in the remainder of the huge territory that the Soviets took over, capitalism had scarcely scratched the surface of economic life. And about 10,000,000 people of the minorities in 1917 still led a predominantly pastoral existence and had not even established a settled agriculture.

In a report delivered at the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party in 1921, Joseph Stalin stated: "The crux of the national problem in the R.S.F.S.R. lies in the obligation to put an end to that backwardness (economic, political and cultural) of the nationalities which we have inherited from the past and to afford the backward peoples the opportunity of catching up with Central Russia politically, culturally and economically."³⁵ This formulation of the matter held of course for the minorities throughout the entire Soviet Union and not merely for those in the Russian Republic.

The absence of capitalism in the minority regions meant the nonexistence of that industrial proletariat which, in Marxist theory, must be the vanguard in the struggle for socialism. Hence at the beginning the essence of the national question in the U.S.S.R., from the class viewpoint, was to establish correct and harmonious relations between the Russian proletariat and the peasantry of the nationalities oppressed by the old regime. The achievement of this difficult goal required great tact and effort, since the peasants of the formerly subject minorities were suspicious of everything Russian.

The Soviet authorities naturally had to take into account, as Stalin explained, "the peculiarities of the concrete economic conditions, class structure, culture and habits of each particular people instead of mechanically transplanting the economic measures of Central Russia, which are adapted to a different, and higher, stage of economic development."³⁶ But these precepts were not always followed and many mistakes were made. There was, for example, the famous case of the Soviet Commissariat of

Food demanding a substantial quota of pigs from Kirgizia where the Mohammedan population had never possessed pigs.

The Soviets speedily rectified one of the most brutal and unjust policies of Tsarism in the sphere of agriculture. That was the systematic colonization of the best arable land in some of the minority regions by well-to-do elements from among the Russian peasants and Cossacks. In Kazakhstan, for example, the Tsarist Government expropriated for this purpose no less than 100,000,000 acres. Of necessity this practice forced large numbers of nationalities like the Kazakhs, Bashkirs, Chechens, Ossets, and Ingushes into the sterile desert, wilderness, or mountains. And it was a prime factor in the decline in population of these peoples under the Tsarist tyranny.

The full and unprecedented task that in 1917 confronted the Soviets in most of the minority territories was nothing less than to lead the native peoples from primitive forms of economy, characterized by feudal, patriarchal, and nomad forms of existence, to the advanced stage of a socialist system *without passing through a transitional period of industrial capitalism*. Yet in a historically brief twenty-eight years of power the Soviets have accomplished exactly this amongst all but a fraction of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

The fundamental economic meaning of socialism is, in simple terms, the elimination of a capitalist and landlord class and the setting up of a classless society of workers and farmers; the establishment of public ownership of the means of production and distribution; and the direction of economic life throughout the country by over-all state planning. Concretely these aims have chiefly entailed the taking over of almost all industry, finance, and transportation by the national, Union Republic, or municipal governments; and the collectivization of agriculture by doing away with the old private farm holdings and working the land through groups of peasants who share collectively in the products and profit, according to the amount of labor each member of the collective performs.

From the beginning the Soviet Government insisted that each national division should have an adequate economic base so that there could be developed in each a well-rounded economy, including both industry and agriculture, workers and peasants, producers' goods and consumers' goods. For this reason the boundaries of the minority republics and regions were drawn in such a manner as to ensure to each nationality the possession of a good, all-round economic position. This often meant the inclusion of cities the majority of whose population was different from that of the surrounding hinterland. And it partly explains why in all cases there are minorities other than the major nationality within a given district.

Though the aim of a balanced economy has been followed for the national divisions in general, that by no means implies that the different regions should not specialize in the particular products that climate, natural resources, and other factors indicate. The Azerbaidzhan Republic, for example, naturally has continued to lay stress on the production of oil and the Uzbek Republic on the production of cotton. Furthermore, the economies of each Union Republic and other national division must fit into the total picture for the U.S.S.R. as a whole. Accordingly, their National Plans are always closely integrated parts of the vast All-Union Five-Year Plans.

The stimulation of industry in sections of the Soviet Union where there was little or no capitalist development in Tsarist days has not only immensely raised the standard of living among the minority peoples concerned, but has also contributed notably to the general advancement of the U.S.S.R. Because of the country's enormous size, the time and cost involved in long railroad hauls have been much reduced by the building of local industries near the source of raw materials; and by the regional production of elementary necessities such as foodstuffs and fuel.

As we saw earlier, even the Soviet North is now growing a large proportion of its own food. New textile factories near the cotton fields are a feature of the Central Asiatic Republics;

meat-packing establishments have sprung up in cattle-raising districts such as Kazakhstan; and the manufacture of paper has been pushed closer to the forests themselves. The growth of industry in regions of the U.S.S.R. far removed from Soviet Europe, in places like Siberia, Central Asia, and the Far East, beyond the reach of German bombers, was of decisive consequence in the outcome of the Nazi-Soviet war.

The Soviet Five-Year Plans started in 1928 and paid special attention to the poorer, more backward sections of the country that could not carry out far-reaching economic undertakings without aid in respect to capital, technical education, and trained workers. Thus the over-all, nation-wide state budget of the Soviet Union allocated especially large increases in expenditures to the Union Republics of the Transcaucasus and Central Asia. The table below for a typical year under the Second Five-Year Plan shows that the percentage of increase was largest for the Soviet Republics of Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kirgizia, while the percentage of increase was smallest for the Soviet Republics of Byelo-Russia, Russia, and the Ukraine:

1937 ALL-UNION BUDGET ³⁷

	<i>Millions of Rubles</i>	<i>Per Cent Increase Over 1936</i>
Russian S.F.S.R.....	17,543.4	16.3
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	5,104.2	17.7
Byelo-Russian S.S.R.....	931.1	16.2
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R.....	768.0	27.9
Georgian S.S.R.....	850.8	17.9
Armenian S.S.R.....	320.0	34.7
Turkmen S.S.R.....	382.0	18.8
Uzbek S.S.R.....	1,145.0	22.6
Kazakh S.S.R.....	959.2	47.5
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	248.6	71.2
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	373.2	28.8

Another index of the economic progress of the first eleven Union Republics is seen in the next table of large-scale industry and agriculture:

LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRY ³⁸

		<i>Number of Workers (thousands)</i>	<i>Industrial Production 1926-27 Prices (million rubles)</i>
Russian S.F.S.R.....	1913	1,900	725
	1935	5,510 *	4,290
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	1913	500	210
	1935	1,614 *	1,130
Byelo-Russian S.S.R.....	1913	26	89
	1935	146 *	1,085
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R.....	1913	52	378
	1935	109 *	1,667
Georgian S.S.R.....	1913	10.9	43
	1935	62 *	640.9
Armenian S.S.R.....	1913	5	14.7
	1935	19 *	142.9
Turkmen S.S.R.....	1913	3 †	29.9
	1935	20 *	171.1
Uzbek S.S.R.....	1913	15	268.8
	1935	83	837.5
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	1913	0.2	1.0
	1935	11 *	76.3
Kazakh S.S.R.....	1913	18	50.9
	1935	84 *	432.4
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	1913	1	1.2
	1935	15 *	99.8

* 1936. † 1927-28.

AGRICULTURE ³⁹

	<i>Sown Area (1938) (thousands of hectares)</i>	<i>Per Cent Collectivized Households (1937)</i>	<i>Sown Area (1938)</i>
Russian S.F.S.R.....	94,320.6	92.6	99.5
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	25,600.8	96.1	99.7
Byelo-Russian S.S.R....	3,336.8	87.5	96.7
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R....	1,091.6	86.5	96.2
Georgian S.S.R.....	985.7	76.5	86.9
Armenian S.S.R.....	437.4	88.7	95.5
Turkmen S.S.R.....	410.1	95.4	99.6

	<i>Sown Area (1938)</i> (thousands of hectares)	<i>Per Cent Collectivized</i> <i>Households</i> (1937)	<i>Sown Area</i> (1938)
Uzbek S.S.R.....	2,832.3	95.0	99.8
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	799.8	89.9	99.2
Kazakh S.S.R.....	6,106.5	97.5	99.9
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	1,021.5	89.1	98.3

Finally, we have the important implications that emanate from the relative increase of the urban and rural populations in the Union Republics. These figures indicate the swift growth, between the censuses of 1926 and 1939, of industry and a city proletariat throughout the U.S.S.R. The economic significance of these statistics is fairly obvious, but their political significance is equally great, owing to the fact that a strong and numerous industrial working class in the various national divisions must be considered the very bulwark of Soviet socialism. The table in question follows:

RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION ⁴⁰

	<i>Rural Population</i>		<i>Urban Population</i>		<i>Per Cent Increase</i>
<i>Union Republics</i>	<i>1926</i>	<i>1939</i>	<i>1926</i>	<i>1939</i>	
Russian S.F.S.R.	76,672,807	72,620,606	16,785,189	36,658,008	118.3
Ukrainian S.S.R.....	23,669,381	19,764,601	5,373,553	11,195,620	108.3
Byelo-Russian S.S.R....	4,135,410	4,195,454	847,830	1,372,522	61.8
Azerbaidzhan S.S.R.....	1,664,187	2,049,004	649,557	1,160,723	78.6
Georgian S.S.R.....	2,083,012	2,475,729	594,221	1,066,560	79.4
Armenian S.S.R.....	714,192	915,183	167,098	366,416	119.2
Turkmen S.S.R.....	861,172	837,609	136,982	416,376	203.9
Uzbek S.S.R.....	3,553,158	4,837,382	1,012,274	1,445,064	42.7
Tadzhik S.S.R.....	926,213	1,233,209	106,003	251,882	137.6
Kazakh S.S.R.....	5,554,905	4,439,787	519,074	1,706,150	228.6
Kirgiz S.S.R.....	879,364	1,188,714	122,333	270,587	121.1
U.S.S.R.....	120,713,801	114,557,278	26,314,114	55,909,908	112.5

The remarkable cultural and economic progress of the Soviet nationalities bears out the claim of the Soviet leaders, in their earliest days of power, that the backward minority peoples

could, if given a proper opportunity, overtake the more advanced peoples of the U.S.S.R. in an economic, cultural, and political sense, and could ultimately catch up, as a part of the Soviet Union in its entirety, with the industrialized nations of the West. To quote Stalin again, "It was formerly the 'accepted idea' that the world has been divided from time immemorial into inferior and superior races, into blacks and whites, of whom the former are unfit for civilization and are doomed to be objects of exploitation, while the latter are the only vehicles of civilization, whose mission it is to exploit the former. . . . One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it dealt this legend a mortal blow."⁴¹

Soviet thinkers go on to assert that even the most backward peoples can reach high levels of civilization in a comparatively short period, and that the experience of minorities in the U.S.S.R. has proved this proposition. The converse is also true. That is, admittedly advanced peoples can, through diverse causes, fall back rapidly to a relatively low cultural plane. The rise and decline of rich, proud, culturally mature empires is a favorite theme of those who meditate on the sting of transiency. Obvious examples are the great civilizations of Egypt, Greece, Rome, Spain, and Mexico under the Aztecs. Today the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Spaniards, and the descendants of the Aztecs are manifestly among the less developed peoples. And it is quite within the realm of possibility that any or all of three dominant nations of 1945—Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union—will in time lose their leadership in the world and become second-rate powers.

These reflections illustrate what I like to call the Principle of Historical Relativity. The retarded socio-cultural level of any national group at present is not a reliable index of its native abilities, and can be explained primarily in terms of economic causation, which includes considerations of climate, geography, and chance isolation from the mainstream of human evolution. The Soviet system throughout rests upon *a profound belief in*

the general educability of human nature. And the Soviets have consciously pursued this principle in regard to nationalities as well as individuals and classes. It is a cardinal point in their minorities policy *to deny the existence of fixed and unalterable national traits* and to affirm the tremendous influence of education and environment in molding the character of both individuals and groups.

The Soviet and Marxist position is that no nation is either inherently industrious or inherently sluggish, inherently religious or inherently this-worldly, inherently individualistic or inherently collectivist, inherently warlike or inherently peaceful. These are all acquired characteristics, potential in every people and depending for their emergence on specific conditioning that derives, in the last analysis, from economic factors. There is, for example, a definite cause-effect sequence behind the Germans becoming the most militaristic nation of modern Europe during the past 100 years, just as there was a definite cause-effect sequence behind the much less evil French militarism of the early nineteenth century. But neither the Germans nor the French nor any other of the famous fighting peoples have been innately and incurably pugnacious.

Most important of all in a world afflicted far and wide by Fascist and Nazi racist propaganda is the Soviet insistence that no nation is inherently superior or inferior to some other nation or nations. This conclusion is supported by sound scientific evidence. For twentieth-century biology and anthropology show that there are no inherently superior races or nations, and no inherently inferior races or nations. These sciences have found that neither the shape of the head nor the texture of the hair, the color of the skin nor the color of the eyes, the weight of the brain nor the height of the man, make one group generally inferior or superior to another group. And nationalities like the Germans who have boasted of themselves as a species of supermen and pure Nordics are in actuality a complex mixture of racial and national types dating far back in history. This

is true of almost all the existing nations of the earth, whatever continent they inhabit.

Moreover, modern science has established beyond question that all the different peoples of this planet have a common origin. As Professor Ruth Benedict and Dr. Gene Weltfish state in their excellent pamphlet *The Races of Mankind*, "The fact of the unity of the human race is proved . . . in its anatomy. It is proved also by the close similarity in what all races are physically fitted for. No difference among human races has affected limbs and teeth and relative strength so that one race is biologically outfitted like a lion and another biologically outfitted like a lamb. All races of men can either plow or fight, and all the racial differences among them are in nonessentials such as texture of head hair, amount of body hair, shape of the nose or head, or color of the eyes and the skin. . . . The races of mankind are what the Bible says they are—brothers. In their bodies is the record of their brotherhood."⁴²

Medical science steps in to buttress these conclusions by revealing that human blood everywhere throughout the world is essentially the same, though all peoples have four distinct types of blood, due to inherited differences in the red corpuscles. When the red and white corpuscles are removed the remainder is called plasma and can be dried and preserved indefinitely in the Blood Bank. Mixed with water, this blood plasma, coming from a human being of any race or nation whatsoever, can be used in an emergency transfusion to save the life or restore the health of another human being from any race or nation whatsoever.

From the foregoing discussion we can make the important generalization that the democratic and ethical principles adopted toward ethnic groups by the Soviet Union are in accord with the established findings of science. This is one prime reason for the success of the Soviet minorities policy. As modern philosophers like John Dewey have frequently pointed out, many a grandiose system of ethics has failed to work precisely because it ran counter to the objective facts of the human situation.

The Soviet record on minorities is itself a living demonstration that human nature is much the same everywhere. For it strongly tends to prove that all peoples are susceptible to the same sort of social and economic stimuli. In an era when the rise of militant, arrogant, and aggressive nationalism has given undue emphasis to the *differences* between races and nations, it is deeply significant that the Soviet experience should bring out the *similarities* between races and nations.

In evaluating the achievements of the Soviet peoples we fortunately do not have to settle the old argument centering around the hoary adage: "You can't change human nature." That controversy depends on which of a thousand and one definitions of human nature we use. In a sense, as Karl Marx once said, "the whole of history is nothing but the progressive transformation of human nature." In another sense it may well be true that no fundamental changes have taken place in the species Man since it appeared upon this earth. But if the inborn equipment of human impulse, intelligence, and physical capacity remains about constant, then we can say that the Soviet nationalities policy has given that native equipment in each national group an unusual opportunity to develop its full creative potentialities.

Just as American political democracy has stressed equality of opportunity for all citizens in the United States, so Soviet ethnic democracy has stressed equality of opportunity for all nationalities in the U.S.S.R. To paraphrase a well-known document, the Soviets take the stand that all nations "are created equal, that they are endowed . . . with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The professed ethical aim of Soviet socialism is the freedom and welfare of all individuals and peoples within the U.S.S.R. irrespective of nation or race.

This Soviet ethical attitude extends to mankind as a whole, to all the manifold peoples of the earth in whatever country or continent they may be. Soviet patriotism, the loyalty of all

inhabitants of the U.S.S.R. to the great Soviet motherland, has certainly developed under the stimulus of the war. But this is far from being equivalent to an exclusive Soviet or Russian nationalism about which some foreign observers have talked so loosely. And a true spirit of internationalism is still a major factor in Soviet life.

This is not the flaming internationalism of the early days when the Soviets were calling for Communist revolutions abroad. Since Premier Stalin and his followers won the political battle against Leon Trotsky back in 1927 the Soviet policy has been to make socialism a visible and outstanding success within the huge domains of the U.S.S.R., thus letting the new socio-economic system serve as an example to other nations that might thereby be stimulated to set up similar regimes. The founders of the American Republic had exactly the same hopes regarding the effect of their experiment on the rest of the world.

The aspect of Soviet internationalism, however, that is most closely associated with the nationalities policy is the ideal that all the peoples of the earth should march forward together in peace, freedom, and equality. This broad Soviet aspiration, which originates in a real sense of human brotherhood, does not include, of course, certain war-making or exploiting groups and classes in foreign lands. But it does embrace the masses of the people in the Fascist countries as distinct from the Fascist governments, war criminals, party members and so on. It is significant that Stalin, as Premier and Commander in Chief, has never expressed hatred toward the Germans as such, but always of the Nazis, the Hitlerites, the German imperialists, or the German invaders.

Maurice Hindus quotes a Soviet youth leader as saying to him: "Soldiers at the front are demanding that we include Mozart and Beethoven in our musical programs. No matter what Hitler and his gangsters do, they will never make us hate the great writers, scientists and musicians of Germany." In April, 1945, the prominent Soviet writer, Ilya Ehrenburg, who

had neglected to distinguish properly between the German people and the Nazis, was promptly rebuked in *Pravda*, the Communist Party daily, by George Alexandroff, chief of the propaganda section of the Party's Central Committee. In his piece called "Comrade Ehrenburg Simplifies Matters," Mr. Alexandroff wrote: "The Soviet people have never considered as one and the same the German population and the criminal Fascist clique ruling Germany."

I do not regard it as the function of this book to discuss in detail the possible application of the Soviet minorities policy, in whole or in part, to nations outside the U.S.S.R. It is sufficient to say that the Soviet attitude toward nationalities fits in well with the general war aims of the United Nations; that the United Nations will be wise to take note of the Soviet solution in their efforts to establish enduring peace; and that certain of the Allies, such as Britain, France and the United States, may be able to draw lessons from the U.S.S.R. that will be useful in domestic or intra-empire minorities problems. The Babel of Balkan peoples might also profit from the Soviet experience.

Fully in keeping with the Soviet nationalities policy were the proposals regarding colonial peoples made at the San Francisco Conference by the Soviet delegation. "The basic objectives of the trusteeship system," the Soviet plan stated, "should be to promote the political, economic and social advancement of the trust territories and their inhabitants; and their progressive development toward self-government and self-determination, with active participation of the peoples of these territories having the aim to expedite the achievement by them of full national independence."⁴³ The final formula adopted in the United Nations Charter promised the furtherance of the development of such peoples "toward self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned."⁴⁴

Whatever one may think of socialism as an economic system

or however critical one may be of the Communist political dictatorship or some other phase of Soviet life, one has to admit that the Soviet Union has made a profound contribution in the sphere of interethnic relationships. Acknowledgment of this point is almost beyond dispute, since even the bitterest critics of the Soviet regime, writers like William Henry Chamberlin, Louis Fischer, and William L. White, have a good word to say about its nationalities policy. Manifestly the national federalism of the U.S.S.R. constitutes one possible solution of the minorities question that must be seriously considered hereafter in this general field.

The Soviet ideal of co-operation and friendship among the various peoples of the globe has today become everywhere an essential of realistic statesmanship. For international collaboration between all countries, large and small, is a necessity for the avoidance of another world war. But that collaboration will be short-lived and that new conflict quick to come if racial and national prejudices remain as virulent as during the first half of the twentieth century. Toward the eradication of these age-long animosities the Soviet Union, with its multitude of ethnic groups progressing in peace and harmony, has taken genuine leadership.

In so doing the Soviets have underlined the great truth that all peoples are part of the same human family, possessing common needs and aspirations, and sharing ever in the high adventure of life upon this ample and abundant earth.

APPENDIX

CHART OF SOVIET NATIONALITIES

Republic, Region or District	Date of Formation	Population (Estimated as of July 1, 1941, and Based on 1939 Census)	Predominant Ethnic Strain	National Origins ¹ (In Per cent of Total as of 1956 Census)	Total of Dominant Nationality in all U.S.S.R.'s (1941 Estimate)	Area (In Sq. Miles est. Nov. 1, 1945)	Location	Capital
RUSSIAN SOVIET FEDERATED SOCIALIST REPUBLIC (R.S.F.S.R.)	1918	114,337,418	Slav	Russian, 71.6%; Ukrainian, 7.8%; Kazakh, 3.6%; Tatar, 2.8%	104,833,698	6,612,601	Soviet Europe and Siberia	Moscow
<i>Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics</i>								
Bashkir A.S.S.R.	1919	3,304,476	Turco-Tatar	Bashkir, 23.5%; Russian, 39.9%	885,747	54,233	Southwest Urals	Ufa
Buriat-Mongolian A.S.S.R.	1923	569,713	Mongol	Buriat, 43.8%; Russian, 52.7%	249,534	127,020	Southeastern Siberia	Ulan-Ude
Chechen-Ingush A.S.S.R. ²	1936	732,838	Japhetic	Chechen, 38.0%; Ingush, 13%	428,400	6,060	Caucasus	Grozny
Chuvash A.S.S.R.	1925	1,132,360	Turco-Tatar	Chuvash, 86.0%; Russian, 15.8%	1,437,424	6,909	Middle Volga River	Cheboksary
Circassian A.S.S.R. ³	1921	1,184,070	Turco-Tatar	Tatar, 25.1%; Russian, 41.2%	4,318,808	10,016	Black Sea	Simferopol
Dagestan A.S.S.R.	1921	977,800	Japhetic	Gorsey, 64.5%; Russian, 22.5%	Dagestan Peoples	13,124	Northeast Caucasus	Makhach-Kala
Kabardino-Balkarian A.S.S.R.	1936	377,485	Japhetic	Kabardin, 60.0%; Balkarian, 16.3%	172,442	4,747	Caucasus	Nalchik
Kalmyk A.S.S.R. ⁴	1935	231,925	Mongol	Kalmyk, 75.6%; Russian, 10.7%	141,150	28,641	Lower Volga River	Elista
Komi A.S.S.R.	1936	235,172	Finn-Ugrian	Komi, 94.3%; Russian, 6.6%	499,487	144,711	Northwest Urals	Syktyvkar
Mari A.S.S.R.	1936	628,984	Finn-Ugrian	Mari, 31.4%; Russian, 43.6%	595,715	8,993	Middle Volga River	Yoshkar-Ola
Mordovian A.S.S.R.	1934	1,248,982	Finn-Ugrian	Mordovian, 31.0%; Russian, 57.2%	1,515,166	9,843	Middle Volga Basin	Saratov
North Ossetian A.S.S.R.	1936	345,592	Iranian	Ossetian, 44.7%; Russian, 48.8%	372,557	2,393	Caucasus	Dzardzhikau
Tatar A.S.S.R.	1920	3,067,740	Turco-Tatar	Tatar, 50.4%; Ukrainian, 41.8%	4,518,808	55,900	Middle Volga River	Kazan
Udmurt A.S.S.R.	1934	1,281,957	Finn-Ugrian	Udmurt, 51.3%; Russian, 43.3%	636,441	15,015	Middle Volga Basin	Izhevsk
Yakut A.S.S.R.	1922	420,891	Turco-Tatar	Yakut, 81.6%; Russian, 10.4%	314,000	1,169,927	Northeast Siberia	Yakutsk
<i>Autonomous Regions</i>								
Adygei A.R.	1922	254,055	Japhetic	Cherkess, 47.8%; Russian, 25.6%	99,441	1,505	Northwest Caucasus	Maikop
Cherkess A.R.	1928	97,233	Japhetic	Kabardin, 33.3%; Beskenkabar, 29.7%; Nogais, 16.8%; Cherkess, 7.5%	172,442	1,273	Caucasus	Sulinov
Jewish A.R.	1934	113,925	Jewish	Jew, 40% (est. 1936)	53,344,824	14,204	South Far East	Birobidzhan
Karachai A.R. ⁵	1936	157,540	Turco-Tatar	Karachai, 81.3%; Ukrainian, 4.4%	79,583	3,821	Caucasus	Mikoyan-Shakh
Khakass A.R.	1930	284,404	Turkic & Mongol	Khakass, 51.7%; Russian, 48.3%	55,274	19,261	South Central Siberia	Abakan
Oirats A.R.	1922	169,651	Turco-Tatar	Oirat & Altai, 37.1%; Russian, 52%	59,140	35,936	South Central Siberia	Oirats-Tura
<i>National Districts</i>								
Agui Burat Mongol N.D.	1917	32,000*	Mongol			10,730	Southeastern Siberia	Aginskoe
Chukot N.D.	1930	14,983*	Paleo-Asiatic			254,991	Bering Strait	Anadyr
Evenski N.D.	1930	38,804*	Mongol			29,957	North Central Siberia	Tura
Kom-Permiak N.D.	1935	20,000*	Finn-Ugrian			8,916	Northwest Siberia	Kudymkar
Koriak N.D.	1930	11,500*	Paleo-Asiatic			19,968	North Far East	Palana
Nenets N.D.	1935	28,155*	Mongol			8,797	Northeast Soviet Europe	Narjan Mar

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